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A
COLLECTION
OF
ESSAYS AND TRACTS
IN
THEOLOGY.

BY JARED SPARKS.

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JANUARY, 1823.

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PROPOSALS
BY O. EVERETT
FOR PUBLISHING IN BOSTON
A
COLLECTION
OF
ESSAYS AND TRACTS
BY DIFFERENT AUTHORS,
ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT SUBJECTS
IN
THEOLOGY.

BY JARED SPARKS.

It is well known to the theological student, and it can hardly have escaped the general inquirer, that some of the most valuable articles in Theology are in a great measure excluded from public use and benefit. In this country, they are rarely or never published; and abroad, they are obtained with difficulty. Some of

of them are embodied in voluminous works, and not printed in a separate form; while others, however highly they are estimated for their general excellence, rational views of theology, and just criticism, are not sufficiently adapted to prevailing sentiments of religion to induce booksellers to risk the expense of an edition.

Several theologians of the greatest piety and learning have been led by their inquiries to results, which have not accorded in all respects with the opinions of the multitude; and hence they have been proscribed by the popular voice, either as unsound in faith, or erroneous in their principles, because their faith and principles have not squared with the standard, which the majority have agreed to set up.

It has been thought, that a greater favour could not be conferred on the inquiring part of the community, nor a more essential service rendered to the cause of truth and rational piety, than to publish in numbers a series of selected articles in such a form that they may be conveniently circulated, and obtained at a moderate expense. Of this description is intended to be the work now proposed to the public. It will be the particular object of the Editor to select such articles, as have intrinsic merit, and are calculated to strengthen the faith of Christians in the divine origin and authority of their religion—to diffuse a critical knowledge of

the Scriptures—to exhibit rational and consistent views of the christian scheme—to inculcate principles of religious liberty and toleration—to encourage the exercise of piety and charity—and to secure obedience to the laws of Christ. And it will not be doubted, that writings of this character and tendency may be found in the works of such men as Sir Isaac Newton, Whitby, Emlyn, Clarke, Lardner, Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, Penn, Locke, Hoadly, Sykes, Price, Paley, Bishop Law, Blackburne, Priestley, Le Clerc, Farmer, Wakefield, Barbauld, Chandler, James Foster, Benson, Cogan, Watson, and many others eminent for their talents, learning, and virtues.

The character, which the work is expected to bear, may be understood from the following articles proposed among others to be published.

Whitby's Last Thoughts.

Sir Isaac Newton's Historical Account of two Corruptions of Scripture.

William Penn's Sandy Foundation Shaken.

Emlyn's Humble Inquiry.

Jeremy Taylor's Liberty of Prophesying.

Le Clerc on Inspiration.

Farmer on the Demoniaes of the New Testament.

Cogan's Letter to Wilberforce on Hereditary Depravity.

Tracts and essays of much less dimensions, than the treatises here specified, may also be taken from larger works. It is not intended to preserve any particular arrangement in regard to the subjects of the articles. Each volume will contain an index, and such directions as may be necessary. A short biographical and explanatory notice will be prefixed to each piece, which may seem to require any such aid to render it better understood; and a note may occasionally be added, where it is wanted for illustration. Nor, in selecting, will the peculiar theological sentiments of the writer be taken into consideration. It will be enough that the article chosen has something to recommend it, either in the learning and ability with which it is written, the truths it contains, or the principles it inculcates.

Such are the outlines of the plan proposed, and it must be obvious to the friends of liberal inquiry, that a few volumes, containing articles of the above description judiciously selected, will be a most valuable acquisition to the library of every reader of theology.

CONDITIONS.

The work will be printed in a duodecimo form, and executed in the best style, on a new type and fine paper. Each volume will contain about 350 pages, and the price to subscribers will be *one dollar and twenty-five cents.*

A volume will consist of two numbers, and a number will be published quarterly, making two volumes a year.

Each number will be handsomely and strongly sewed in covers, and forwarded by mail, or otherwise, as may be directed.

Any subscriber can close his subscription at the end of a volume by giving timely notice.

Any person becoming responsible for more than six copies shall receive them for *one dollar* a volume.

The work will be commenced on the first of January next.

Subscriptions must be paid, *for the year*, by the first of April, when the first volume will have been completed.

Communications may be addressed, post paid, to the Publisher in Boston, or to the Editor in Baltimore.

September 3, 1822.

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THE public is here presented with the first number of the Theological Collection, the plan of which is described in the preceding Proposals. This number will serve as a specimen of the work, both in regard to its character, and the style in which it will be executed. The Editor has received warm encouragement to engage in the undertaking from gentlemen on whose judgment he can rely; but, as the time has not yet come, when a work, whose professed object is to promote free inquiry, liberal sentiments, and a spirit of toleration in religion, can be hoped to gain an extensive patronage, its success must ultimately depend on the active zeal of those, who feel a particular interest in its objects. Although the publisher has not ventured on a large edition, yet the expense will be considerable, and the work cannot be continued beyond the first volume, unless a subscription be obtained adequate to the amount.

The next number will complete the first volume, and will contain a title page, table of contents, and preface.

TURRETIN
ON
FUNDAMENTAL ARTICLES
IN
RELIGION.

TURRETIN.

THE name of TURRETIN was long conspicuous in the theological school of Geneva. Three persons of this name, Benedict Turretin, Francis Turretin, and John Alphonsus Turretin, father, son, and grandson, were successively professors of theology in that place. The last of the three was the most distinguished, and was the author of the *Discourse on Fundamentals in Religion*, with which the present work commences.

He was born at Geneva, 1671, and after making, with close application and under the best teachers, extraordinary proficiency in his studies at home, he went to Leyden, where he attended the lectures of Spanheim, and completed his education. In this place he wrote a treatise, pointing out the great varieties of opinion in the Church of Rome, which was intended to counteract the influence of Bossuet's work on the *Variations in the Protestant Churches*. From Leyden he went to England, where he became acquainted with Tillotson, Burnet, and Wake, and is said to have done much towards correcting the erroneous

impressions under which the English clergy laboured respecting the Genevan Church. He next visited Paris, and held public disputations with the doctors of the Sorbonne.

On his return to Geneva, he engaged in the ministry, and so much was he esteemed by his countrymen, that the magistrates, to testify their sense of his merits, created for him a professorship of ecclesiastical history. He was afterwards appointed rector of the Academy of Geneva, and then professor of theology, which latter office he held till his death in 1737. He filled several other public stations, the duties of which he discharged with fidelity and credit.

His theological writings are numerous, and equally remarkable for their learning and their moderation. It was a favourite project with him to unite all the Protestant Churches in one communion. He deprecated the differences, which churches and individuals were fond of thrusting forward as causes of separation, and laboured to show, that the violent controversies about metaphysical and abstruse points in theology, which prevailed in his time, had no alliance with the true spirit of christianity. He endeavoured to inculcate moderation and rational inquiry, and to convince the contending parties, that the religion of Jesus was designed to be a bond of peace and union. In the prosecution of this purpose he wrote his treatise on *Fundamentals in Religion*.

This treatise was originally written in Latin, and constituted part of a work, entitled *Nubes Testium*, or *Cloud of Witnesses*, which was dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It gained great applause among the learned, and the part, which is now offered to the public, was translated into English and published in London in the year 1720. The greater portion of the work, from which this article is taken, is made up of copious extracts from ancient and modern writers of high authority, which the author adduces as testimonies, that his opinions respecting fundamental articles are not new or rash, but have been supported by the most enlightened men in all ages of the church. These testimonies are arranged in four classes. The *first* contains the sentiments of the ancient Fathers; the *second* embraces extracts from Luther and Lutheran divines; the *third* from Zuinglius, Calvin, and their followers; the *fourth* from the Acts of Synods and Councils. "Yet," says the English translator, "our author complains under each class, that, for the most part, men have not been so uniform and consistent with such expressions as might be wished; but produces them as testimonies extorted by the force of truth, which has darted into men's minds with irresistible light, when they have calmly and impartially considered these things." And in regard to the decisions of Synods and Councils, he argues, that their failure has not been owing to any defect

in the plan, but to the want of a proper disposition in the parties concerned.

As these testimonies would add little weight to the author's reasonings, in the estimation of the English reader, they have not been translated. Few persons at the present day, and especially in this country, will respond to the zeal manifested against Popery in the eighth chapter ; yet we must remember, that the author wrote in other times, and under the influence of many exciting causes, of which we can at present have but an imperfect conception. We must, also, give credit to his own declaration, that principles and not men, were the objects of his remarks. But after all, it must be allowed, that it is not easy to reconcile some of the sentiments advanced in this chapter with the liberal and tolerant spirit, and rational views, which pervade all the other parts of this treatise.

The translation here published is the one mentioned above ; and if it sometimes fails in elegance of style, it is seldom without the greater merit of being simple and perspicuous.

DISCOURSE
ON
FUNDAMENTAL ARTICLES
IN
RELIGION.

Introduction.

THE subject of *Fundamental Articles*, being as weighty and important as any in religion ; either that our notions herein may be just and right, and that we may be able to distinguish what is of the essence of religion, from things which are not essential, nor of equal importance ; or that we may know how to conduct ourselves with a pious and christian moderation towards those who differ from us in things which are not necessary ; and not venture to condemn them, to exclude them from our communion, or, as is usual with many, to send them to the very pit of destruction ; that we may treat of it as briefly and clearly as possible, we shall divide this discourse into the following heads. *First*, we shall show what is com-

monly understood by fundamental articles, and such as are not fundamental. *Secondly*, that there is really such a distinction. *Thirdly*, we shall reject some false marks of fundamentals, and such as will not hold. *Fourthly*, we shall produce those which to us seem the best and fittest. *Fifthly*, we shall consider, whether it be possible to fix a certain and determinate number of fundamental articles. *Sixthly*, how we ought to conduct ourselves towards those who differ from us in fundamentals. *Seventhly*, how we should behave towards such as differ from us in things not fundamental. *Eighthly*, we shall bring an instance of a fundamental difference in our separation from the church of Rome. *Ninthly*, an instance of a difference not fundamental, in the differences among Protestants. *Tenthly*, we shall offer some pacific and healing advices, which may be useful to promote union among christians, leaving them to the consideration of all good men, and lovers of peace.

CHAP. I.

What we are to understand by Fundamental Articles, and such as are not Fundamental.

FUNDAMENTAL *Articles* are those principles of religion, which so relate to the essence and foundation of it, and are of so great importance, that without them religion cannot stand, or at least will be destitute of a

chief and necessary part. Thus, *There is a God*, is a fundamental article, nay the first of all ; for take away the existence of God, and all religion must needs fall to the ground. In like manner, *God is a beneficent Being, and will certainly reward his worshippers*, is also a fundamental article ; for take away the goodness and munificence of God, and by far the greatest motive to piety and virtue is destroyed ; and therefore, the Apostle teaches, that “ he that cometh to God,” that is, worships him in any wise, “ must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

And since religion, if we are wholly destitute of it, or at least if we are deficient in any principal part of it, cannot yield us its proper fruits, which are, to render us acceptable to God, and to bring us to eternal salvation ; therefore, fundamental articles are such as are necessary to be known, and believed, in order to obtain the favour of God, and the salvation of our souls.

Again, since religion with all its essential parts is the bond of Church Communion, hence we may conclude, that fundamental articles are such as are necessary to be professed, in order to hold communion with any particular person, or with any religious society ; for it would be absurd to admit any into such a society, who did either directly deny, or in effect destroy the essentials, or, as one may call them, the very vitals of religion.

* Heb. xi. 6.

These are the commonly received notions, that are by the generality of divines fixed to the name of fundamental articles. Some, indeed, the better to distinguish them, make two sorts ; fundamentals with *respect to things*, or to religion itself ; and fundamentals with *respect to persons*. Others make three sorts, and divide them into things necessary to *salvation*, things necessary to *religion*, and things necessary to *the church*. But though these distinctions may sometimes be well grounded, and have their use, as we shall see afterwards ; yet, for the most part, and in the ordinary course of affairs, they all centre in one point, and signify only the different properties and consequences of fundamental articles. For those which are fundamental with *respect to things*, or to *religion itself*, are also fundamental with *respect to such persons*, to whom religion is duly proposed, and who are endued with sufficient capacities to understand and receive it ; so that without them, in the ordinary course of affairs, such persons cannot be entitled to the favour of God, nor obtain salvation, nor be accounted true and sound members of the church. Nor indeed can it better be known what is essential in religion, or what is requisite in order to admit a person into Church Communion, any other way, than from those places of scripture where the terms of salvation are laid down, as will be more fully shown in the sequel of this Discourse. Therefore, passing by these, let us

rather premise some other distinctions more pertinent to the present purpose.

1. Since the revelations, which have been granted to us by God, have been very different ; some whereof have been more clear and full than others, as is evident, by considering the revelation, which is purely from nature, the revelation granted to the Patriarchs, the revelation delivered by Moses, and lastly the Christian Revelation ; in like manner, fundamental articles must be understood to differ, according to the difference of these revelations. But our design is principally to treat of the Christian Revelation, and consequently of such articles as do, or do not, belong to the essence of christianity.

2. As the revelations made by God have been various, so the state and conditions in which he has placed men have been so likewise. The capacities, the endowments, and the circumstances, which have been allotted to them, have varied almost infinitely ; all which things must necessarily be regarded, and allowed their due weight, in describing fundamental articles.

3. We must also observe, that persons may offend against some points of religion two ways ; either by mere *ignorance*, or by a direct *denial* or *opposition* ; and both these may take their rise from different causes, and be attended with different circumstances and effects ; some whereof may be more criminal, and others more innocent.

4. Persons also may err fundamentally two ways; either by expressly denying something that is fundamental, or by joining something to the foundation, that does really destroy it. In the former manner, they stumbled at the foundation, who denied the resurrection, of whom St. Paul speaks;* and in the latter, those teachers of the Galatians, whom the same Apostle does so sharply rebuke in his Epistle.

5. When we say that fundamental articles are such as are necessary to be known and believed, in order to obtain salvation, we would not be so understood, as if we thought that none, who is ignorant of any one of these articles, or mistakes concerning it, can possibly arrive at salvation; for as in crimes and evil actions, so likewise in ignorance and mistakes, there is a twofold remedy; the one on our part, which is *repentance*, either general or particular; the other on God's part, *mercy* or *forgiveness*; by means whereof, as we may hope for pardon of the greatest crimes, so it cannot be denied, but we may also of the most grievous errors.

6. This whole matter may be considered in a double respect; either as it relates to the *ordinary* course in which things generally proceed, and which God has made known in his word; or to those *extraordinary* ways in which God may, and it can hardly be doubted but he oftentimes does act. But here we only speak of the ordinary way, and leave the other to the wisdom and good pleasure of God.

* 1 Cor. xv.

These things being premised in the general, the use whereof will appear in what follows, we are next to show, that this distinction of truths and errors into fundamental, and not fundamental, is not a vain and empty distinction.



CHAP. II.

Some Articles in Religion are Fundamental, and others not Fundamental.

THAT there are really some articles in religion *fundamental*, and others *not fundamental*, may be demonstrated two ways; from the nature of the thing, and from scripture.

1. *From the nature of the thing.* And truly, unless we will allow this distinction, we must say one of these two things; either that no truths in religion are fundamental, and necessary to be known; or that all are so; neither of which can be allowed. That no truths are necessary to be known, none but an atheist can venture to affirm; and they who own the being of a God, can do no less, surely, than grant that the knowledge of him is necessary. The subjects of any kingdom or state cannot be ignorant without blame, that there is a prince, or some civil magistrate under whom they live, and whom they are bound to obey. Nay, further, they ought to

have a knowledge of the laws of that kingdom or state ; for every one knows, that ignorance of the law is no excuse. But now, how much more necessary is it for us to know, as well as we are able, the Lord of the universe, and the laws that are given us by him ? And if it be necessary to know him, who is Lord of all, then it cannot but be displeasing to him, for us to entertain dishonourable notions of him, or to charge him with the most detestable crimes, to place him upon a level with the meanest of creatures, and to pay him a worship that consists of wickedness or cruelty. Neither is it to be thought, that in doing thus, we can possibly be innocent, and free from blame. And since all this might be said, though we had no revelation, how much more are these things necessary to be known, now we have one, wherein God has manifested the certain knowledge of himself, and appointed certain worship to be paid to him ?

But on the other hand, that all truths of religion are fundamental, and necessary to be known, is so absurd an imagination, that no man who seriously considers, can admit of it ; for who can suppose, that God does necessarily require all truths of religion, without exception, to be known of every individual man ; and consequently that all these truths are equally to be esteemed and regarded by us ? Who can imagine, that all truths, which depend upon chronology, geography, criticism ; that all proper

names in scripture, and that all circumstances, even of the minutest events, which concern religion, are necessary to be known? Certainly the design of religion is not to exercise the wit and understandings of men, nor to burden and overwhelm their memories with so vast a number of all sorts of truths; but to implant in their minds the fear and love of God, and excite them to certain duties. Those truths, therefore, that tend most to this end, are certainly of the greatest importance; and they, that have little or no tendency hereunto, are undoubtedly of less moment, and so by no means to be accounted necessary.

Again, they who say all truths of religion are fundamental, and necessary to be known in order to obtain salvation, must either be tormented with endless doubts and perplexities, or imagine themselves to be infallible, so as certainly to know all truths without exception, and be sure, that they do not err in the least point. And what man in his wits can possibly pretend to this? Finally, he who says all truths of religion are fundamental, and all errors damnable, ought to prove it; but the thing will admit of no sort of proof; nay, on the contrary, the goodness and wisdom of God do most directly oppose such an assertion. Since, therefore, it cannot be affirmed on the one hand, that no truths are *fundamental*, nor on the other, that all are so; hence it follows that a difference must be made between

truths that are *fundamental*, and truths that are *not fundamental*.

2. *This is also evident from scripture.* For it cannot be denied but the Apostle* does make a plain distinction between the *foundation*, and *things built upon the foundation*, and proceeds to show, that things built upon the foundation are of two sorts; some of them are good and profitable to men; these he calls *gold, silver, precious stones*. Others are useless, and really hurtful, such as vain and idle disputes, rash and hasty conclusions, and ceremonies that lead to superstition; which he calls *wood, hay, and stubble*. The former will *stand* and abide the fiery trial, that is, the judgment of God; but the latter shall be *burnt up*; yet the authors or promoters of such things may be saved themselves, *though so as by fire*, that is, not without difficulty.

In like manner, the Apostle distinguishes between things wherein christians agree, and according to which they ought to walk, and things wherein good men may differ without any prejudice to piety or mutual love. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded;" namely, with regard to what he had before laid down concerning the privileges and ceremonies of the law. "And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us

* 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11, 12.

mind the same thing ;”* or be affected in the same manner, and preserve peace and union among ourselves. And accordingly the Apostles, in many places of scripture, teach us, that some things are of so great moment, that he who errs in them, and departs from the doctrine of Christ, is not only to be sharply rebuked, but to be removed from the communion of the church.† And these important points are signified to us by various appellations in scripture ; they are called, *the foundation ; the principles of the doctrine of Christ ; the first principles of the oracles of God ; wholesome doctrines ; the form of sound words ; the word of truth ; the doctrine which is according to godliness*. And so, on the contrary, in other places,‡ we are told, that there are some things in which persons who do err, ought nevertheless to be borne with as brethren ; of which we shall speak more hereafter.

Neither is this distinction of the points of religion a new thing, or a notion peculiar to us ; but has been allowed in all ages, and by divines of all parties. The Jews undoubtedly had their fundamental truths, as appears from the writings of their rabbies. So Moses Maimonides, the most learned of them, entitles the first book of his treatise, called, *The Strong Hand*, thus ; *Of the Foundations of the Law* ; and

* Phil. iii. 15, 16.

† Gal. i. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 John, 10.

‡ Rom. xiv. and xv.

begins it with these words ; “ The Foundation of Foundations, and the Pillar of Wisdom, is to know that there is one First Being, which gave being to all others.”

And among the ancient Fathers of the Church, nothing was more common than to use those words, *the principles, the elements, the necessary things*, to signify the primary and fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. This is what Tertullian means, by “ the rule of faith, the only immoveable and unchangeable rule, which it is sufficient for a man to know, though he knows no more.”* And from these primary articles, wherein “ the foundation of all catholic doctrine did consist, they distinguished the lesser questions of the divine law,”† concerning which, persons might have different sentiments, without destroying the unity of faith. And Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Austin, and others, give testimonies concerning this matter, which would be too tedious to recite.

Hence also creeds and confessions of faith, and then catechisms took their rise ; which contained the first principles of religion, such as it was thought proper for catechumens, or beginners, to profess their belief of. And in the first ages, these things were short and plain ; but afterwards, through the dissensions that arose in the church, they were exceedingly multiplied and enlarged ; insomuch, that Hilary

* De Virginibus velan. cap. 1.

† Vincentius Lirinensis.

complained, that *confessions were framed at every one's pleasure.*

The papists do carefully distinguish questions which are *of the faith*, from questions which are *not of the faith* : and pretend that the power of determining the former lies in their church ; and therefore that she may increase or diminish the number of articles of faith at pleasure. And besides an *implicit* faith, by which persons are bound to believe whatever the church believes, they say that some things are also to be believed *explicitly* ; and, accordingly, dispute among themselves about these articles of faith, which are to be believed *explicitly*, some making them more, some fewer ; but others say that the number of them cannot be determined. All which things do plainly show, that though they do not use the same terms as we do, yet they do not reject or condemn the common distinction, of *fundamentals* and things *not fundamental*.

This distinction is so obvious among protestant divines of different parties, and has been so generally received among them, that it would be needless to mention any. Therefore, without any further confirmation of this famous distinction, let us see what are the marks or criterions by which we may be able to distinguish *fundamentals*, from things which are *not fundamental*. And we shall first of all separate the false marks, and then offer some rules which appear to us more just.

CHAP. III.

False marks of fundamental articles rejected.

THE opinion of the papists here first presents itself, who pretend that all things which their church determines, *as of the faith*, do immediately become articles of faith; and consequently that the church may, by her determinations and decrees, increase the number of them at pleasure. But this notion is easily destroyed. For, *first*, such an authority was never granted by God, to any assembly of men, nor to any private teachers whatever. *Secondly*, the Apostles themselves confess, that they had no dominion over the faith of christians, and that they delivered nothing to them but what they had received of the Lord.* *Thirdly*, all christians are commanded to examine whatever their pastors teach them, to beware of false prophets, to try all things, to hold fast that which is good; and if an angel from heaven, or the Apostles themselves, should preach any other Gospel, to pronounce them accursed.† So that pastors of the church have no power to add even the least point to the christian faith, much less to increase the number of its articles at pleasure. *Fourthly*, the church herself, or her pastors, are so far from having a power of altering them, or adding to their

* 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Cor. xv. 3.

† Mat. vii. 15. 1 Thes. v. 21. Gal. i. 8, 9.

number, that the true church, and true pastors thereof, can no otherwise be distinguished from others, than by considering whether they hold the foundation, or depart from it. This mark, therefore, which the papists bring, is altogether precarious, nay, tyrannical and antichristian ; for it is certainly the greatest tyranny, and pride, to assume a power of determining what is necessary to be known in order to salvation, and, in a matter of so great consequence, to add to the word of God.

2. Others are of opinion, that whatever is delivered in scripture, is upon that very account fundamental ; and to this purpose they urge the words of St. Paul ; “ Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning ;” and also, “ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”* But, as has been already observed, who can imagine that all things found in scripture, of whatever sort, as proper names of men, places, animals, plants, and all circumstances of the most minute actions, are so necessary to be known, that none can be saved without the knowledge of them ? The words of the Apostle carry no such meaning ; for the sense of those places is not that each sentence, word, or syllable of scripture, does contain something in them of the utmost consequence to christianity, and so that all these are necessary to

* Rom. xv. 4. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

be known ; but only that the doctrine contained in that book, and the principal things delivered there, are to be for our instruction above all other things ; and that whatever is necessary for our instruction, exhortation, or correction, is fully contained in it. Yea, the Apostle does largely shew in another place that we ought “to bear the infirmities of the weak.”* And those words, “for whatsoever things were written,” &c. are added for no other purpose, but to show us, that by the instructions of scripture we are to learn a christian meekness and forbearance ; which very thing does prove that disagreement in matters of less importance, although they are things contained in scripture, ought not to be accounted fundamental.

3. Another mark, which many make use of to distinguish fundamentals from such as are not so, is taken from what they call the *analogy of faith*, or, which is the same thing, systems of divinity, in which some take one method, and some another. We shall only bring an instance or two out of them, to illustrate this matter. Some, therefore, talk after this manner. Those things, which contain the causes of salvation, are for that very reason necessary to be known, in order to salvation ; but, say these men, in the causes of salvation, three things are to be distinctly considered,—the *design*, the *purchase*, and the *application* of it. The design is laid in God’s

* Rom. xv. 1. and all the xivth chap.

eternal predestination ; the purchase is made through the merits and satisfaction of Christ, and the application by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit ; and then they proceed to infer, that not only these things themselves, but all questions appertaining to them, are necessary to be known in order to salvation. Others argue thus ; Christ is the Foundation, according to the Apostle, “ Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* But say they, in Christ there are several things to be distinctly considered ; as, his person, twofold nature, different states, his offices, and benefits. To which heads it is very plain, that innumerable questions, if not all in divinity may easily be referred. But they who argue in this manner, though they say nothing but what is true, and indeed of very great moment, yet their mistake lies in this ; they confound what was necessary to be done in order to procure salvation, with what is necessary to be known ; which two things are very different, as is plain by considering the case of infants, of persons that are deaf, or distracted, and of the patriarchs in the Old Testament. The thing may be illustrated by a similitude taken from our food ; every one knows, that abundance of things are requisite to the digestion and separation of our food ; and yet no body ever said that these things were necessary to be known, in order to receive nourishment from it.

* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

Hitherto we have rejected those marks, which to us seem faulty, by containing too much. There are others no less faulty, for requiring too little. From these therefore the next mark is taken.

4. Those things only are fundamental, which have been received by all christians, and in all ages. If this rule be right, I fear it will utterly destroy all fundamentals at once ; for, from the very times of the Apostles, there have been teachers who have called themselves christians, and yet have attempted to overthrow some of the principal and most necessary things in christianity. Thus some have denied the Resurrection of the Body, and some that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh ;* some have affirmed, that the ceremonies of the law are necessary to salvation, and others have even denied the necessity of good works ; as is evident from many places in the Epistles. So that many of the teachers of those times, even of those who called themselves christians, are said to be *antichrists, liars, false prophets, denying the Lord that bought them*. And every one knows, that not long after, there arose many pestilent sects among christians ; as the Gnosticks, the Marcionites, the Manichees, who denied some doctrines of the utmost importance, as the Unity of God, the necessity of good works, and of suffering martyrdom in defence of the truth when called to it. If this rule, therefore,

* 1 Cor. xv. 2 Tim. ii. 18. 1 John iv. 3.

which we now oppose, be true, it will hardly leave any thing at all that is fundamental.

5. Some limit the foundation of religion within such narrow bounds, that they allow nothing to be a fundamental, but to obey the divine precepts, and to trust in the promises of the Gospel ; which is another mark that we reject. We own, indeed, that obedience is the end, and therefore a principal part of religion ; for as Christ told his disciples, “ if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them ;” and St. Paul testifies, that “ the end of the commandment is charity ;” and St. James, “ Pure religion and undefiled, is to visit the fatherless and widows, and to keep one’s self unspotted from the world.”* But if we would speak accurately, we cannot say, that the whole essence of religion does consist in obedience, and trust in God, and in nothing else ; for there must be some truths known by the light of nature, and others revealed by God, upon which our obedience and trust must be founded ; which do therefore make part of the foundation, according as St. Paul teaches us in the forecited place. “ He that cometh to God, must believe that he is,” &c.† And Christ, “ This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.‡

6. Some will have the Apostles’ Creed, as it is commonly called, to be the standard and measure of

* John. xiii. 17. 1 Tim. i. 5. James i. 27.

† Heb. xi. 6.

‡ John xvii. 3.

fundamentals ; and we do not deny but this hypothesis comes the nearest to truth, of which more hereafter ; yet for some reasons we cannot entirely acquiesce in this opinion. For, *First*, it is agreed among learned men, that this creed was not composed by the Apostles, but long after their time, and that the copies of it differed in some articles ; there is, therefore, no reason why so much authority should be given to a human composure, though ever so ancient and venerable, as that the terms of salvation should be thought to depend upon it.* *Secondly*, neither

* Ambrose was the first, who is known to have attributed this Creed to the Apostles about four hundred years after Christ ; and Ruffinus not much later ascribes to it the same origin. Leo Magnus, Jerom, John Cassian, and many other writers of celebrity at that period, gave credit to Ambrose and Ruffinus, and spoke of the Creed as the work of the Apostles. It even became a popular notion, that every Apostle contributed a part ; and in a sermon ascribed to Austin, the Creed is divided into twelve articles, and each article is assigned to its particular author.

But these accounts have long been known to be fabulous ; and although some articles of the Creed were early in use, no evidence remains of any part having been the work of the Apostles, or that it was considered as such before the commencement of the fifth century. This Creed underwent many variations from in to time, and in different churches it was usually clothed with a different dress. There was the Grecian Creed used by Irenæus, the Creeds of Carthage quoted by Tertullian, that of Aquileia mentioned by Ruffinus, that of Ravenna, and that of Turin explained by Maximus, and many others scattered through the ancient writings. Each of these was called the Apostles' Creed, although they differed essentially among themselves. Ruffinus states, that the *Descent into Hell* was neither in the

does every thing inserted into this Creed seem to be of so great importance, that a man cannot be saved without the knowledge thereof. Thus, if a person should be ignorant of what is there said of Christ's descent into hell, of the name of Pontius Pilate, and some other things, which were put in, in opposition to some errors that are now out of date, it cannot be thought that his salvation would be hazarded hereby. *Thirdly*, on the other hand, there are some things no less necessary to be known than to be done, which yet are wanting in this Creed, namely, those principles of religion, which direct and inform our practice. Therefore, passing by these and such like criterions, which are not founded upon sufficient reason, we shall endeavour to produce some rules, which seem to be better grounded, and may more safely be depended upon.

Roman nor Oriental Creeds; and bishops Burnet and Pearson affirm, that this clause was not inserted till the fifth century. Nor was the *Communion of Saints* found in any copy of the Creed till about the same period; and the clause, *Life Everlasting*, was omitted in many copies while it was contained in others. The *Holy Church* was first mentioned as an article of the Creed by Tertullian in the third century. It was not till after the time of Tertullian that this article was enlarged by inserting the word *Catholic*.

These are some of the more prominent changes in the Creed, after it became a symbol in general use among the churches. Many others of minor importance might be enumerated, but these are enough to prove its uncertain origin, and that it can have no authority in settling the articles of Christian faith. See King's History of the Apostles' Creed, Chap. ii, and v.—Pearson on the Creed, Vol. i. p. 341; Vol. ii. p. 287. ED

CHAP. IV.

*Principles by which we may be able to distinguish
Fundamental Articles.*

1. OUR first principle is this ; *That we are not under a necessary obligation to know, or believe any truth, but what is clearly revealed unto us, and for the belief of which, God hath indued us with necessary abilities.* This is a principle of the most undoubted truth ; for who can conceive, that a most righteous God, who has the tenderest concern for his creatures, should require them to believe any thing, which he has not revealed to them, and that clearly too, or which they are under a natural incapacity of believing ? It is reported indeed of Caligula, among other horrible cruelties, that he ordered his laws to be writ in such small characters, and to be hung up at so great a distance, that it was almost, if not altogether impossible to read them ; and this he contrived on purpose, that a greater number of offenders might fall into his hands. But far be it from us, to ascribe such a cruel and injurious way of proceeding to the best and most righteous Being.

From this principle we may draw an inference which is of very considerable weight, namely, *That fundamental articles are not the same to all men, but differ according to the different degrees of revelation, and according to the different capacities and circum-*

stances of men. The reason is plain ; for since God has made very different revelations of himself, and has given very different capacities to men, and has placed them in stations and circumstances that most widely differ ; it is therefore impossible that all men should be obliged to the same measure of knowledge, or the same standard of faith.

2. Our second principle is this, *That he alone, who is Lord of life and death, that is, God, has power to determine what is necessary to be believed in order to obtain salvation, and what error shall certainly exclude men from it.* This also is a very plain principle, and none who seriously considers it, can call it into question ; for who, I pray, has the least pretensions to settle the terms of life and death, but that “only Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy ?”* From whence the Apostle makes this demand, “Who art thou that judgest another ?”†

But since God has made known his will two ways, by the light of nature, and by revelation, nothing therefore ought to be reckoned a fundamental, but what God has determined to be so, one of these two ways.

And the light of nature discovers but very few things in this matter ; little more than what the Apostle takes notice of as a thing sufficiently known thereby, That “he that cometh to God, must believe

* James iv. 12.

† Compare Rom. xiv. 10.

that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* And should a man be well established in these two principles, and the things which are plainly connected with them, and sincerely endeavour to know the will of God, and to put in practice what he did know ; I very much question whether such a one could remain ignorant of any principle, which can be proved necessary from the light of nature.

But revelation goes further, and enjoins some points to be believed as things necessary to salvation, and dissuades us from believing others upon pain of damnation. It tells us, that eternal life is placed in the knowledge of certain truths ; that he who believes them, does please God, is blessed, and shall be saved ; but he, who does not believe them, shall be damned, cannot please God, is yet in his sins, and the wrath of God abides upon him ; from which places we may conclude, that these are fundamental articles, and necessary to be known of all, to whom the gospel is preached, and who are endued with sufficient faculties to receive it.

3. But besides those points, which are expressly, and in so many words, declared to be necessary ; *Those things likewise which flow from these principles, by plain and necessary consequence, must be added to the catalogue of Fundamentals, or things necessary.* For plain and necessary consequences are of the same

* Heb. xi. 6.

nature with their principles ; they are to be ranked with them, and allowed to be of equal importance ; nay, they are, as it were, contained in them, and properly speaking do not differ from them. Thus, upon granting the being of God, the chief attributes of the deity do so plainly and necessarily result from it, that they cannot but be thought to be of equal moment with the principle itself.

But let it be observed, that we speak only of *plain and necessary consequences* ; for it would be very unreasonable to rank doubtful, or obscure, or remote consequences, with the principles themselves, and to show an equal regard to them ; for at this rate, all things would be put upon the same bottom, and there would be no end of fundamental articles.

And this seems to us the true and only way, by which we may clearly and safely distinguish fundamental articles from others, namely, by the discovery of the divine will, and the declarations of God himself, either in express words, or by plain and necessary consequence ; for, as has been already observed, who shall pretend to settle the terms of salvation and damnation ? Who shall pretend to make laws concerning these things, but he, and he alone, who has power to save, and power to destroy ? And, therefore, they who impose upon christians, things as fundamental, which God has not revealed, or which are doubtful and obscure, as the church of Rome does, and others who follow her steps ; these,

whoever they are, act tyrannically, and arrogantly claim that authority to themselves, which belongs to God only.

But though this be the chief, if not the only mark of fundamental articles, yet, that we may more easily and certainly distinguish them, we shall subjoin some other principles.

4. *Fundamentals are plain, adapted to common capacities, and free from all the subtile and intricate distinctions of the schools.* The reason is evident; for since religion does equally concern all men, and is no less designed for common people than for the learned, yea, it may be more; whatever therefore does exceed the capacity of the vulgar, is upon that account not to be reckoned fundamental, or necessary. Religion certainly differs from scholastic niceties as much as any thing; the scripture was given by poor plain men, and it is given to such. Christ gives thanks, that “these things were hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes;” and St. Paul tells us, that there were “not many wise” among the Corinthians; by which he diligently admonishes us to distinguish carefully the doctrines of heaven from the wisdom of the world. So that, to use the words of Hilary, “the faith lies in great plainness of speech; for God does not call us to happiness by difficult and knotty questions, nor does he persuade us by various turns of oratory and eloquence. Eternity lies in a plain and narrow com-

pass ; to believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and to confess that he is Lord.”*

5. *Fundamentals are few in number.* This principle is founded upon the same reason as the former ; for the minds of common people would be as much confounded by a multitude, as by the difficulty of articles. Therefore it has pleased divine goodness to comprise them in a narrow compass ; that, as St. Austin says, “The plainness of them might suit the simplicity of the hearers ; that the shortness of them might be accommodated to their memories, and that the fulness of them might make amends for their want of learning.” And so Casaubon, in the name of king James I. of Great Britain, writes thus, “The king thinks it very right, in the explication of things simply necessary to salvation, to say, that the number of them is not great.”†

6. *Fundamentals are very often and various ways repeated and inculcated in scripture.* This is a rule that we infer from the goodness and condescension of God ; for since scripture is given for this end only, to make us wise to salvation, it cannot be doubted but those things, that chiefly tend hereunto, are frequently proposed in scripture, and strongly urged upon us. In any other sciences, honest and skilful masters do not use to pass over slightly and hastily the first principles ; but frequently repeat

* Hilarius de Trinitate, L. 10. in fin.

† Casaub. Epist. ad Card. Perron.

and inculcate them, till they find they are clearly understood, and have taken fast root in the minds of their scholars. And who can doubt but God, the supreme and infinitely wise instructor of men, does use the like caution and prudence in giving them his heavenly precepts?

7. *Fundamentals are principles of piety; that is, they do not only not contradict the practice of godliness, but, on the contrary, are useful, and even necessary to promote it.* And, truly, the end of religion is nothing else but to make us holy. This is the design of the whole gospel; herein the mysteries, the precepts, the promises, and threatnings of it do all centre; upon which account the gospel is called, "The mystery of godliness, a doctrine which is according to godliness;" and we are assured that nothing else will avail us but *the new creature*, or obedience to the commandments of God. Hence then it follows, that whatsoever is of no use to promote godliness, for that very reason is not a fundamental truth; and on the other hand, that whatever destroys godliness, or is inconsistent therewith, is a fundamental error. But let it be observed, we do not say, that whatever may conduce to godliness, is therefore a fundamental; for there are many things which may be pious, or at least have the appearance of piety, that are not at all essential to christianity; nay, and if thoroughly examined into, some of them would not be found true, of which sort are the many

fables and figments of men's brains ; which the experience of all ages abundantly shows.

8. *A thing may often be fundamental itself, though the mode and circumstances of it are not so.* This follows from the foregoing principles ; for when a thing is only revealed to us in general, and enjoined us by God as necessary, then the thing itself only is to be accounted a fundamental without its mode and circumstances, which are not revealed with equal evidence, or the like marks of necessity. And, indeed, there are very few things, especially in divinity, the mode and circumstances of which we can thoroughly understand. If, therefore, the mode and circumstances, the causes and adjuncts of a thing, are to be accounted fundamental, it will follow that abundance of things, of which we can have no clear perceptions, and which do far exceed our capacities, are nevertheless fundamental, contrary to what has been observed in principles first and fourth.

9. *Persons may err fundamentally two ways ; not only by expressly denying a thing that is fundamental, but also by adding to, or building something upon the foundation that does really weaken and overturn it.* This principle we have already treated of in chapter first, and the reason of it is evident ; for it is not sufficient to acknowledge fundamental truths with our lips, if we actually overturn them by positions or actions contrary to them. Thus, what can it signify for a man to profess that God only is to be

worshipped, if at the same time he does actually worship creatures, as saints and angels, images, crosses, and the like, after the manner of the heathens themselves?

10. To these principles, which seem to contribute not a little towards a right distinguishing of fundamentals, let us only add one more, which may serve as a rule to manage and form our judgments, both of ourselves and others; namely, *With respect to ourselves, our safest way is to beware and guard against all, even the smallest errors, as if they were fundamental; and to make the utmost progress in the knowledge of divine truths; but with regard to others, we ought to pronounce nothing but with the utmost caution, the greatest charity, and meekness.* For, as prudence directs men to use the greatest care and diligence in providing for their own safety; so, on the contrary, christian charity will not suffer a man to condemn others, and charge them with damnable errors, till he is compelled to it by the irresistible evidence of the thing itself, and of the oracles of God; and then not without unwillingness and great reluctance.

CHAP. V.

On the exact number of Fundamental Articles.

THIS question is a very perplexed one, yet ought not to be wholly omitted by us, namely, *Whether the exact and precise number of fundamental articles can be determined?* We doubt not, but those articles may be sufficiently distinguished by every one for his own private use and instruction; and, accordingly, have laid down rules in the foregoing chapter, which will help us to a knowledge of them; but to reduce them to a certain and definite number, so as to be able to say there are neither more nor less, is more than we, together with all protestant divines, think to be either necessary or possible, for the following reasons.

1. Because these articles are not the same to all men; some were fundamental under the Old Testament, others are so under the New. Some are fundamental to those, who have the use of their senses and reason; others to infants, children, deaf persons, and those of a weak understanding. Some are fundamental to those who enjoy a perfect liberty of hearing the word of God; others are so to multitudes in the world, from whom the gospel is in a great measure hid, as thousands of peasants inhabiting the villages of Spain and Portugal. Some are fundamental to beginners, and as it were children in Christ;

others to persons of a greater proficiency, such as those Jews ought to have been, whom the Apostle reproves for their dulness in learning.* So that, as it would be absurd to expect that one common garment should suit all statures, or the same portion of food all appetites, or the same degrees of labour all artists; so it is impossible to fix a certain number of articles necessary to be known of all men.

2. Because these articles are sometimes fewer and more general, sometimes more numerous and particular; which depends upon the different method of conceiving and distinguishing things. Thus in scripture we find, that things necessary to salvation are sometimes reduced to a single head, sometimes to two, sometimes to more. In one place we are told, that nothing is necessary to be known by us, "save Christ crucified"†; in another, that eternal life consists in knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.‡ Sometimes all things are referred to *Christ's resurrection alone*; at other times only to *his coming in the flesh*. Sometimes *faith alone* is required; at other times *faith and repentance*; sometimes *faith that works by love*; sometimes *a new creature*; and sometimes the whole law is said to be fulfilled in *charity* only. All which sufficiently shews, that things necessary to salvation are sometimes reduced to fewer heads, and at other times divided into more; and therefore cannot be fixed to

* Heb. v. 12.

† 1 Cor. ii. 2.

‡ John xvii. 3.

a certain number, which shall always necessarily remain the same.

3. Because it may oftentimes be justly questioned, whether any particular doctrine ought to be placed among fundamentals, as a consequence drawn from an important place of scripture, or a particular exposition of some general doctrine. Examples might be brought from moral subjects. Thus, many difficult questions have been started about usury, lying, gaming, of the measure we ought to observe in giving alms, and many other such things. And if so many difficulties arise about subjects of a practical nature, how should it be otherwise in matters that are speculative? And who, but a person of consummate assurance, would venture to determine the exact weight and importance of each of these questions, and to settle their precise bounds, with respect to our salvation or damnation?

4. As it cannot certainly be determined, what is the exact pitch of virtue, or just how many sorts of duties, what number of good works, pious discourses, and almsdeeds, are necessarily required of every man, that he may be saved; so neither can such weak and imperfect creatures as we are, without the utmost arrogance, pretend to determine precisely, what degrees of knowledge are absolutely requisite hereunto. Let them tell us what are the farthest lengths allowable in these things; let them mark out the exact bounds of things necessary, and unneces-

sary, who can comprehend the divine perfections, and know the utmost limits of the justice and mercy of God. For our part, we freely own it is far above our reach to do it. And here, to use the words of the famous Witsius, "Sometimes divine grace does join the elect to Christ, by a very slender thread; and yet the brightest flames of love to God, and the most sincere desires to please him, may be kindled in those souls that have but a very poor knowledge of articles of faith. And who is he, that without the determinations of God, can himself exactly determine that least single point in each article, by which the divine tribunal is indispensably obliged to proceed."*

5. What has been said concerning religion, and the necessary articles of it, may be illustrated from other arts and sciences. Who, for instance, ever told us precisely, how many truths are necessary to be known, to get a man a reputation in logic, or mathematics, or law? Or who has ever determined the precise quantity of food, and no more, that is necessary to support life? And yet there is no great danger of our being starved for want of this knowledge. Or who has ever told us how many sorts of food, and how many sorts of poisons there are in the world? And yet without knowing it, we may take our food safely enough, and sufficiently guard against being poisoned. And why may not

* Wits. in Symb. Apost. Exercit. II. § 15.

the same judgment be allowed concerning saving truths, and poisonous errors ?

But, perhaps, some will say, how can the conscience of a christian be easy, without being satisfied in this inquiry, How many truths precisely he ought to know, that he may be saved ? I will answer in a word. Let a man but sincerely love truth, and seek it heartily, begging help from God, and making use of those who are capable of giving him light ; and let him not omit, or neglect any proper means, that he may make continual progress in the ways of truth and holiness ; and such a one may certainly conclude, that God will not be wanting to him, nor suffer him to continue ignorant of any thing necessary for him to know ; or if he is ignorant of any matter, or does err and mistake in some things, God will graciously pardon him, even as a father does his children.

CHAP. VI.

On Church Communion between those who differ in Fundamentals.

WE are now to consider how we ought to conduct ourselves, either towards those who differ from us in *fundamentals*, or towards those who differ in things *not fundamental*.

As to the former, there is no doubt but that all just and proper means ought to be used with them, to convince them of their errors, and to bring them to a sound mind ; but if these prove ineffectual, and we cannot converse with them, without apparent danger of being infected ourselves, we ought not only to abstain from the private conversation of such persons, but also from their Church Communion.

There are several express commands in scripture to this purpose, besides many weighty reasons, which might be brought to confirm it.

Among other places of scripture, these are very evident. “ Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”* “ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? And what communion hath light with darkness ? And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ?”† These words are indeed primarily meant of unbelievers and heathen idolaters ; but yet, they may equally be understood of those, who imitate the heathen in their idolatry and superstition. “ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.” “ If any

* Gal. i. 8, 9.

† 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine, which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing; from such withdraw thyself." "An heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that bid-deth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*

And there are several weighty reasons, which might be brought to confirm this matter; from the nature of the church; from the regard we owe to God; from the decency and order of divine worship; from the care we ought to take of our own souls; from the obligation we are under to do all we can towards recovering the erroneous, and to give a good example to others. But these things we can but barely mention, consistent with our designed brevity.

* Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. 5. Tit. iii. 10. 2 John, 10, 11. Rev. xviii. 4.

CHAP. VII.

*On Church Communion, and mutual forbearance,
between those who differ not in Fundamentals.*

THE case is much otherwise with respect to those who differ only in points *not fundamental*. It were indeed greatly to be desired, that there was no disagreement at all among christians, and that the truths of God were equally discovered and known of all men ; but since this is never to be expected, because of the variety of men's minds, the different methods of education, and the frailty of human understanding ; that which comes the nearest to it, is, that we should endeavour to secure the essence of religion, and then patiently bear with one another in all the rest ; and that persons, who differ in things not fundamental, should regard each other as brethren, and maintain church communion together, and shew a christian forbearance on all sides. To this purpose there are plain texts of scripture, and many other arguments of the greatest force.

And among other places of scripture where such forbearance is enjoined, the fourteenth chapter and part of the fifteenth of the Epistle to the Romans, deserve our greatest regard ; where the Apostle, taking occasion from the differences that arose among the primitive christians, about the ceremonies of the law, and the distinctions of meats and days,

commands that *the weak in faith*, that is those who had not right sentiments of these things, should nevertheless be received by the rest as brethren, and admitted as true members of the church, not *despised* nor *condemned*, but *their infirmities* tolerated.* And that he might bring the Roman christians to such a temper, he argues with them so affectionately, so strongly and copiously, and draws such odious consequences from the contrary practice, shewing them that hereby the authority of God himself would be invaded, that those for whom Christ died would be destroyed, and that the work of God would be destroyed, as plainly shows how much he had this at heart, and that this forbearance of disagreeing parties ought to be ranked among the first, and most important duties of the christian religion.

And not only in that place, but in several parts of his Epistles, he earnestly recommends the same duty. Thus in Chap. viii. 9, 10, of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, discoursing of things sacrificed to idols, he shows that christians, who had not right sentiments, ought not only to be patiently borne with, but that others ought to accommodate themselves to their weakness; and testifies of himself, that this was his own practice; “For though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more; and unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews;

* Rom. xiv. 1, 3, 4, 10. xv. 1.

to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law ; to them that are without law, as without law ; to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak ; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”* And in the following verses he signifies that he was obliged thus to act, in order to his being partaker of the heavenly reward. Whence it follows, that let a man be ever so religious, and take ever so much pains in preaching the gospel, yet if at the same time he wants this gentleness and forbearance towards his brethren, who differ from him, he can neither be accepted of God, nor obtain salvation at last.

And who that reads the excellent commendation of charity, with which the whole thirteenth chapter of that Epistle is taken up, can choose but be excited to practise this duty of forbearance ? Some of the chief characters there given of charity, are, “ that it suffereth long, that it beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”† And if this description be given with respect to the vices of men, and their defects in goodness, it is certainly no less applicable to errors, especially to light ones, and such as do not at all affect the foundation of religion.

It is true, indeed, that the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians, is very severe against some false

* 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20, 21, 22.

† xiii. 4, 7.

teachers; which yet does not weaken, but really confirm the necessity of this forbearance and toleration. For those teachers were themselves against tolerating others, and would have the ceremonies of the law imposed upon all christians, as things necessary to salvation; by which means the christian faith would have been greatly corrupted. And at the same time, that he so sharply inveighs against these teachers, he is very large in recommending charity and forbearance, even so great a diversity of opinions as this was,* and commands, that they who were overtaken in a fault, should be restored in the spirit of meekness; and that they should bear one another's burdens.† And at last, when he had told them that the essence of christianity did not consist in circumcision, or uncircumcision, that is, in observing or omitting the ceremonies of the law, but in the *new creature*, that is, in true and real holiness; he adds these words, wherein he most affectionately desires, as well as commands, a mutual forbearance among persons, who differ in things not fundamental; "and as many as walk according to this rule," that is, that agree in the essentials of christianity, and form their lives according to this rule, "peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."‡ If, therefore, the Apostle does pray for peace, and promises mercy to such persons, is it not unreasonable to condemn them, to

* Gal. v. 13, 14, 15. † Gal. vi. 1, 2. ‡ Gal. vi. 15, 16.

send them to the pit of hell, or to exclude them from the Communion of the Church ?

But there is no place where this forbearance or toleration of persons disagreeing only in things not fundamental, is more plainly enjoined, than that which has been already cited out of the Epistle to the Philippians,* where every one may see that the Apostle would have christians walk by the same rule in things whereto they have attained, that is, in fundamentals ; and to mind the same thing ; but if in any thing they were otherwise minded, to wait till God should please to reveal it to those, who were in an error, and bring them to a more perfect knowledge of the truth ; yet, in the mean time, holding fast the bond of christian fellowship and charity with one another. In like manner, that pathetic exhortation to love and unity, which we have in the beginning of the second chapter of the same Epistle, is given for the same end. And lastly, the Apostle enjoins it upon christians, “ *to let their moderation be known unto all men ;*”† that is, their meekness and gentleness in bearing the infirmities and deficiencies of others.

And no doubt these exhortations “ *to forbear one another with all lowliness and meekness, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, to speak the truth in love, to put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, and to put on bowels of mer-*

* Phil. iii. 15, 16.

† Phil. iv. 5.

*cies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, that so they might forbear one another, and forgive one another;’’** no doubt, I say, but these, and such like exhortations, of which all the Epistles are full, were principally designed to lay the heats and contentions between the judaizing and other christians, with which the churches of those times were greatly molested; the proper remedy for which, if we regard the Apostles, was nothing else but mutual forbearance, which christians ought to exercise when differing from one another.

And if we turn our thoughts to the following circumstances, we shall plainly perceive of how great weight these things are, to recommend the like forbearance among christians in these days. *First*, the Apostles were infallible, and if they would not attempt to compose these differences, by exerting their authority, but chose to recommend forbearance on both sides, how much more should we take the like course, who have not the least pretences to infallibility? *Secondly*, the dispute was not about a trifle, but a very weighty affair, even the difference between the law and the Gospel; a thing that did not consist in mere speculation, but had a great influence both upon practice and worship. Alas! how many trivial controversies, in comparison of this, do sour the minds of christians in these days? *Thirdly*, both sides were furnished with very considerable

* Ephes. iv. 2, 3, 15, 31, 32. Col. iii. 12, 13.

arguments, the one a law given by God, the other the defence of christian liberty. *Fourthly*, St. Paul himself, who so strenuously urged this forbearance, had before such a flaming zeal for the law, that he was even mad for it. *Lastly*, these precepts of forbearance were given after the vision from heaven to Peter, and after the Apostolic synod ; so that these controversies had been sufficiently determined already by this vision, and by the decree of the Apostles. Whoever, therefore, shall seriously consider these circumstances, and weigh them impartially, cannot surely but conclude, that these Apostolical precepts of forbearance, if they had any weight in their times, ought to have much more in our times, and in the present controversies.

In short, wherever Christ and his Apostles recommend charity, meekness, or the love of peace ; and on the contrary dissuade us from contentions, quarrels, and schisms ; in all those places, it is most certain that this forbearance is enjoined upon us. But that the necessity of it may more clearly appear, we shall add to these testimonies of scripture, some reasons of very great weight which we shall but just mention, and leave the fuller explication of them to the judicious and pious reader.

1. It is our duty to cultivate communion with all the disciples of Christ ; for Christ will have all his disciples to be one,* and the church is represented

* John xvii. 21, 22, 23.

as *one body*, in several places of scripture. Therefore, communion ought to be maintained with all those whom we do not know to be unworthy of the name of christians; and certainly they cannot be accounted unworthy of it, who hold all the fundamentals, and differ from us only in things which are not fundamental.

2. Those things wherein christians do agree, who are united in fundamentals, are things of so great importance and dignity, that all other things are not considerable enough to disturb their peace, and to separate them from one another. This argument the Apostle pursues with a great deal of life and spirit, in the Epistle to the Ephesians; and nothing, I think, can more effectually press this duty of forbearance, than what he there saith; "I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness, and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." For, adds he, "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."* If persons agree with us in such things as these, and are impressed with the weight and importance of them as they ought to be, we

* Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

shall be injurious to ourselves, and reflect dishonour upon Christ, if we refuse to own and esteem them as brethren.

3. Without this forbearance, which we recommend, it is impossible that any peace or unity should continue long in the church ; for there are but two ways of obtaining peace, either by *uniformity of opinion*, or by exercising *forbearance* towards those who err in smaller matters. The former is an impracticable thing ; for such is the variety of men's minds, their education and capacities so different, and things themselves do often appear in such different views, that for all persons to have just the same sentiments in all points, is a thing utterly to be despaired of. It has never yet been seen from the first beginnings of the church unto the present times, nor ever will to the world's end. We must, therefore, have recourse to forbearance of those, who err in lesser matters, if ever we desire to see the church enjoy peace and tranquillity.

4. Either we are to break off communion for all and every diversity of opinion, or for some only. No one will say the former ; for, at this rate, there would be as many churches and sects in the world, as there are private christians. But if for some only, what other bounds or distinction can be settled than this, that those things, which belong to the essence and foundation of religion, should be inviolably adhered unto ; but those things, which do not

concern the foundation, should be left as matters of forbearance ?

5. Either we believe, that those who differ from us in things not fundamental, are odious to God, and shall be damned, or we do not. And, certainly, it would discover a very bitter spirit, and the utmost rashness, to judge the former ; but if we believe the latter, why should we hate and reject them ? If we believe that God does accept them as children, why should not we regard them as brethren ? If we believe they will praise God with us in heaven, why should we be unwilling that they should worship him with us on earth ?

6. Either we believe, that all things in religion are at present fully made known, and that there is no room left for any further discoveries ; or we believe, that there may be some improvements of knowledge, and that it is possible some amendments may be made to the common received opinions. To say the former would be exceeding rash, and a supposition not consistent with the state of human affairs ; nay, such a piece of intolerable pride, as has always met with indignation from men truly learned ; for *now we know but in part*, and *prophecy in part*, as the Apostle says. If, therefore, improvements may yet be made, we ought by all means to bear patiently with those that offer us any thing new ; for otherwise we suppress all improvements, and stifle the gift of prophecy, and bring in sloth and

barbarity ; for who will attempt any thing of this kind, when it becomes dangerous to do it ?

7. The want of this forbearance does not really remove differences of opinion, but only makes persons, who differ from the received notions, conceal their sentiments, yea, and very often speak contrary to the sense of their minds ; which is such a reproach to good men, and especially to ministers of the gospel, as can never be sufficiently lamented. But it will be said, that this is their fault who do so ; and undoubtedly it is ; but yet they can never be thought innocent, who, by rigorous severities, lay such strong temptations before men to hypocrisy.

8. Toleration is the greatest friend to truth, and the contrary its greatest enemy ; for if the strong will not bear with the weak, neither will the weak bear with the strong ; for every man counts himself strong, and thus all will come to condemn, and to execute one another ; by which means, truth itself will be banished out of many parts of the world. On the contrary, if toleration did every where prevail, truth would have its full scope, and easily gain ground, by the force of its own arguments.

9. Gentleness and forbearance are the most likely method to bring those that err, to an acknowledgment of the truth, and the contrary method no less likely to hinder both their instruction and amendment ; for by condemning and banishing them from our communion, we make them hate us, and

suspect every thing whatever we offer to them ; but if we deal gently with them, and cease not to own them as brethren, they will regard us as their friends, and more readily and impartially consider what we propose for their conviction.

10. From want of this forbearance, arise hatred, strife, quarrels, and schisms in churches and universities, and tumults in civil society. Perhaps it may be said, that schisms are more likely to arise from the toleration of different opinions ; but if the thing be duly considered, it will appear that all these evils have arisen not from toleration or forbearance, which is in itself a meek and harmless thing, but from a contrary spirit, which, if once laid aside, persons might at any time entertain different sentiments, and yet preserve a hearty love for one another.

11. Private christians, but especially ministers, who are engaged and taken up in these controversies, are obliged to neglect several things, wherein their labour might be employed to much better purpose, and where it is more needed ; but especially the life of religion does greatly suffer and decay by this means.

12. Want of this forbearance does make the different sects of christians forget to stand up for one another, and so to disregard, and even give up the common interest. Therefore, the emperor Julian, that he might engage christians in their

mutual destruction, sent for the chief heads of the different sects, and set them on quarrelling together ; knowing well enough, as Ammianus Marcellinus testifies, “ That no savage beasts are more cruel to men, than most christians are to others.”* And, surely, no one can be ignorant, how much the protestant cause has been weakened by intestine divisions.

13. These differences and animosities give great offence. Wicked men take occasion from them to scoff at christianity, and say that christians have no such thing as certainty in what they believe ; but are continually quarrelling, and tearing one another to pieces, upon controversies of every kind. It is sufficiently known, with what boast and insult, a late sceptic attacked the various schemes concerning predestination, and made his use of the too great rigor with which that argument is generally treated.

14. They, who are against tolerating errors, which are not fundamental, must think themselves infallible ; for, if they thought themselves liable to err, they would also think, that they stood as much in need of forbearance as other persons ; and, therefore, would readily allow the same privilege to others, and say with the poet, *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*†

* Ammianus Marcellinus, Lib. xxii. cap. 5.

† Hor. Ars Poet. Ver. 11.

15. If indulgence ought to be allowed to faults and crimes of a lesser nature, which none will deny, why not also to errors of equal degree? What! are moral vices and crimes of a less heinous and offensive nature, than inaccurate notions about things sublime and obscure, which sometimes only reside in the understanding, without having any evil influence upon practice?

16. Besides, the necessity of this forbearance is confirmed from the example of God himself, who does, with such admirable patience and goodness, bear with the infirmities of men, and who has manifested remarkable gentleness and forbearance in all his revelations and dispensations. When he accommodated himself to the gross notions of the Jews, and treated and argued with them after the manner of men, what was this but the most gracious condescension, in bearing with their childish notions, till he had brought them to more manly thoughts? And every considerate person will find more instances than one, of this nature in the christian revelation.

17. This forbearance is also enforced by the example of Christ. How many errors did he bear with in his Apostles and disciples, until the spirit descended like fire upon them, and purged them away? As their errors about the nature of his kingdom, about his death, ceremonies, and the calling of the gentiles. The Apostles in many cases

had but *little faith* ; and yet with admirable gentleness and patience, he bears with their weak faith.

18. This forbearance is also recommended to us from the example of the Apostles, who, though they were infallible, as we have seen before, yet exercised forbearance themselves, and enjoined the practice of it upon others.

19. And herein they were imitated by their successors, the fathers of the primitive church, at least by the best and wisest of them, whose many differences of opinions, and rites, did not disturb the peace of the churches ; as particularly Socrates has shown.* And, therefore, if any arose, who too rigorously condemned their brethren, and refused them communion ; as Victor about the observation of Easter, and Stephen in the dispute concerning the baptism of heretics ; others stood up and opposed such unchristian attempts, and never scrupled to rebuke them sharply for such things. I confess persecution gained ground, with other evils that sprung up in the church, till at last anathemas and excommunications were thundered out for the merest trifles, without end ; and what innumerable evils arose from hence, every one knows. But Christ never gave his disciples any such instructions ; and the first and best teachers of christianity took no such methods.

* Hist. Eccles. Lib. v. cap. 22;

Lastly, to add no more, the divines of latter times, who have justly been reputed men of learning and wisdom, do all agree with us in this matter. I shall only mention two out of abundance, the one of Zurich, the other of Bern. The former is the famous John Wirtzius, who, in the middle of the last century, was professor of divinity in the university of Zurich. He says, "The foundation of the fellowship and communion of saints upon earth, is 'the one God and Father, one Lord, one faith, one baptism;' and consequently, a consent and agreement in fundamental articles of faith. So that where this foundation is not, or where this agreement in fundamental articles is wanting, there cannot be that fellowship and communion of saints which we make profession of in the Apostles' creed; but the words of St. John do then take place, 'If any come unto you, and bring not this doctrine,' &c. But where the unity of the foundation, and of christian faith does stand firm and unshaken, there is a communion and fellowship of saints, and there it ought to be, and to continue firm, and not at all be shaken, by a disagreement in this or the other point, which do not directly overturn the foundation; as also in rites and ceremonies. For as all differences do not utterly destroy the church, but only those that overturn the foundation of faith; in like manner all differences do not dissolve the fellowship and communion of saints, but only those that directly shake and weaken

the foundation of faith in whole or in part." And presently after ; " In short, agreement in fundamentals, or doctrines necessary to salvation, is requisite to the communion of saints ; also in things not fundamental, in difficult questions, nay, even in rites and ceremonies, agreement would be amiable, and greatly to be desired. But in this imperfect state, and in so great a variety of particular churches, of the customs of places, and of human capacities, it is not to be expected ; yet the communion of saints may continue firm, as long as their consent in fundamentals does so continue."* Whence he concludes, that the reformed churches may, and ought to come to a union among themselves.

The other is also a man of great note, Benedictus Aretius, a divine of Bern, who lived at the age of the reformation. He, speaking of the unity of the church, tells us, " That it consists in an agreement in the chief articles of true religion, notwithstanding diversity of gifts ;" and repeats it again, " That the unity of the church consists in an agreement in the chief articles of faith ;" and goes on thus ; " We call those the chief articles of faith, which are necessary to salvation, and which are expressly contained in the creed. To come to an agreement in these, is what we call union ; in other things, where persons cannot come to an agreement, diversity of opinions must be allowed ; yea, further,

* *Disquis. Theol. de Sanctorum Communionem*, § 61, 62, 67, 70.

we may freely own our ignorance in these matters, as St. Austin says, ‘It is no reproach to a christian to confess his ignorance in abundance of cases;’ which makes against those, who insist upon universal consent, even in the most minute questions, and unless a person will subscribe to every point, are prepared with their thunderbolts, heresies, sects, excommunications, nay, prisons, and death. It were easy to produce proper instances hereof, if there was need; but we know this was never the method approved of by the true church, only some malignant spirits have kindled such flames, that they might obtain the pre-eminence. But let them consider, what an absurd and impossible thing they require; for there never was so perfect and finished a genius in the world, to whose judgment all learned men could see reason to subscribe, and to conform their own private sentiments. And the diversity of gifts seems to speak the same thing; for what if I have not that light that you have, or you that I have, or neither of us what a third hath, shall we therefore go to persecute one another for our different apprehensions of things? No! Religion allows no such thing. But if we examine the thing more thoroughly, this diversity of opinions sometimes has its advantages; for hereby men’s abilities are excited, the reason of things is more duly considered, scripture is more carefully examined and compared with itself, arguments are more impartially weighed, and

posterity comes to understand and believe what at first was thought to be absurd.”* Thus excellently well does he argue.

But we are not insensible, that several things may be objected against this forbearance of persons, who disagree with each other, that we have been pleading for ; which yet may so easily be confuted from what has been already said, that we need not stay particularly to answer them. We shall only observe two things in the general ; one is, that whatever is objected against toleration, or forbearance, is objected also against scripture itself, and particularly against the Apostle Paul, who so earnestly maintained and recommended it to us ; the other is, that if any inconveniences should happen to attend such a toleration, or forbearance, let it be remembered, there are more, and greater by far, that attend the contrary ; which is not an ungrounded assertion, but abundantly confirmed by the experience of all ages, as all who are acquainted with the state of the church in ancient or latter times, will readily own.

* *Problematum Theologicorum parte III. cap. de Concordia Ecclesiæ.*

CHAP. VIII.

Fundamental difference between Protestants and the Church of Rome.

WHAT has been hitherto said, has been mostly in generals; we will now briefly propose an instance of a *fundamental* difference, and another of a difference *not fundamental*; both which we shall take from the neighbouring and most considerable societies of christians in the world. And hereby the use and application of the rules, which we have laid down, will be made to appear.

There is not a more striking instance of the former any where to be met with, than in our separation from the Church of Rome, which before we go about to explain, there needs a few things to be cleared. *First*, to form a right judgment of the Romish religion, we are not to regard the sentiments of this, or that private man, or of this or that private doctor; but we are to regard public acts, decrees of councils, which, in their account, have the authority of law; and the constant usage of their church, which has never been condemned, but carefully enjoined and applauded. *Secondly*, it must be owned, the papists do admit all the fundamental points of the christian religion, but yet by another way, which has been already taken notice of, do effectually strike at the foundation itself, by adding

to, or building such things upon the foundation, as do loosen, and in a great measure destroy it. *Thirdly*, yet all the errors of the papists are not of the same consequence ; some, indeed, are tolerable, but others cannot by any means be borne with. *Fourthly*, we must also distinguish between different times ; for some things might very well be borne with, at a time when there was less light, and errors were not so thoroughly established, and a greater liberty was allowed men to differ ; which things at another time, and in other circumstances, would be perfectly intolerable, after greater light had shined forth, and greater advantages were given to discover the truth ; and after those things, which formerly were left free and undetermined, were passed into the form of a law. *Fifthly*, we must make a great difference between our judging of men, and our judging of things ; and, indeed, the best way is to pass no judgment at all upon men, but to leave them to the judgment of God, unless we have uncontestable evidence to go by. But we are allowed to judge freely of things, of doctrines, of worship, and discipline, from the word of God.

These things being premised, we shall briefly offer the following arguments to show that our dissent from the church of Rome is fundamental, and consequently that we can have no communion with her, as matters now stand.

1. Since they require us to believe, and to profess, as articles of our faith, things, which we do not believe, which we know to be false, yea, which we are fully persuaded are absurd and contradictory, certainly, we cannot, with a safe conscience, communicate with them, but must be hypocrites in a matter, which of all others is the most weighty and important, and in which persons cannot dissemble, without incurring the greatest guilt. Thus, they require us to believe *transubstantiation*, though we know it is attended with endless absurdities and contradictions. They require us to believe *purgatory*, and the interest and intercession of their saints in heaven, besides many other things, which at least are doubtful, nay, and some of them plainly false, and contrary to scripture. Let a man but read the *Confession of Faith* of Pope Pius IV. which is drawn up according to the determinations of the *Council of Trent*, and joined to its decrees, and he will presently see, that all who differ from it, are condemned, anathematized, and, consequently, that they cannot live in that communion without hypocrisy.

But, it may be said, all persons are not obliged to believe these things ; it is sufficient only to submit to the church. But besides many reasons against submitting to the church, which we shall see hereafter, all they that do so submit, are by that very act bound to submit to all the decrees of their councils,

and consequently to those doctrines, of which we have been speaking.

It will be replied, that the Council of Trent hath not been received in all places, namely, in France. But *first*, in those very places, where the decrees of the council concerning discipline, are not admitted, as in France, yet their decrees concerning matters of faith are ; which are the things we are now speaking of. *Secondly*, most of those things, which were determined in the Council of Trent, had been determined before in some preceding councils ; as the *worship of images* in the second Council of Nice, and *transubstantiation* in the Council of Lateran, in the year 1215.

2. Another insuperable reason, why we cannot hold communion with them, is the doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning the supreme rule, or the supreme judge of controversies of faith. If any thing is important, or fundamental in religion, this is undoubtedly so, namely, What is the rule of faith ? Who is the supreme judge in religious matters ? Where is the supreme authority lodged, which ought to determine and regulate all our belief ? There, if any where, we may apply the words of Lucretius,*

———— in fabricâ, si prava est regula prima,
Normaque si fallax rectis regionibus exit,
Et libella aliquâ si ex parti claudicat hilum ;
Omnia mendose fieri, atque obstipa, necessum est,
Prava, cubantia, prona, supina, atque absona tecta.

* Lib. iv. ver. 516.

For if any thing is admitted as a rule of faith, which is fallacious, and liable to mistake, a door is hereby opened for all errors, and the greatest absurdities ; but such is the rule, such the judge, and such the principle, which the Church of Rome holds, when she makes the *Church*, meaning herself, the infallible rule of faith, and supreme judge of controversies, to whom all are bound to submit.

Now, lest they should say we reject this principle, without giving any reason, we shall briefly offer two or three things only which seem to be unexceptionable. And,

1. If any proof is valid, that a person is not infallible, this undoubtedly is so ; if it be certain that he has actually erred, and that in a very gross and palpable manner, and very often too ; but especially, if he has decreed those things which are absurd, impossible, and imply many plain contradictions. But the Church of Rome did so decree in the case of *transubstantiation* ; and consequently this instance alone is sufficient utterly to overthrow that principle.

2. There is no need of taking any great pains to overthrow the popish rule of faith ; we may sit still, and at a distance behold them opposing one another. For if the church is infallible, this infallibility must reside either in the Pope, or in Councils ; or in Pope and Councils both together. But the Gallican Church hath abundantly shown, that the Pope is not infallible ; and the Italians, on the other hand, have

as plainly shown, that Councils are not. And each side frequently rejects the decrees of Pope and Councils together ; so that we may hold our peace, and be quiet, and they themselves will destroy one another, and sufficiently demonstrate the defect of their own rule.

And that these intestine divisions amongst them are not a light and trivial matter, is abundantly evident, from innumerable other quarrels, which have been carried on with great warmth in former times ; but especially from the present dispute about the Constitution *Unigenitus* ; for great part of the Gallican Church does charge the Pope, in their public writings, with grievous errors in matters of faith, and moral principles, and in matters of discipline too. On the other hand, the Pope takes frequent occasion to anathematize those that oppose him. Some bishops take part with the Pope, others are against him, and it is not yet known what will be the issue of so warm a contention. Now, what madness and folly would it be for us to involve ourselves in controversies of so great importance, about the most important question of all others, namely, the rule of faith ; wherein, to speak the truth, both sides seem to conquer in attacking their adversary's cause, and both to be conquered, when they come to state and defend their own ?

3. We have yet greater reason to reject their rule, when we consider that it destroys all certainty of

faith, and necessarily introduces skepticism ; for that we may be certain of the authority of the church, it must be discovered to us, either by the light of nature, or by scripture, or by the determinations of the church herself. But it cannot be known by the light of nature, for there is no such principle in nature, that there is an infallible church ; nor from scripture, as may be inferred from their own confession, for they say, that the authority and sense of scripture itself, does depend upon the church, and cannot be known but by her assistance ; and those texts, that are brought to prove this matter, are very foreign to the purpose. Nor, lastly, can it be known from the church herself ; for, to say that we are to believe the church, because the church has so determined, is ridiculously to take for granted what ought to be proved.

Nor is it sufficient to know, that there is a church, yea, an infallible one ; but we ought to know which and where that is, and by whom she makes known her mind. Concerning which things, we have already shown how greatly they differ and contradict one another.

And if we were certain thus far, we ought to know further, in what things the church cannot err ; whether in matters of *fact*, as well as in matters of *right* ; and in matters of *discipline*, as well as of *doctrine*.

Moreover, we ought to know all that is necessary to make the determinations of the church valid, that they may have the force of a law. If they are Pope's Bulls, we ought to know when they are to be esteemed authoritative, when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*. If they are the Decrees of Councils, we ought to be informed, when they are lawfully assembled, who are the true members that ought to be present, what is the due form of proceeding, and when they are truly General Councils, which things make the popish rule of faith the most uncertain thing in the world. And, hence, every one may see what reason we have to reject it.

4. But one of the principal reasons, which make us call our difference with the papists a fundamental one, is taken from the business of worship, which is not only very different from, but such as can never be reconciled and brought to the same form with ours. For that worship, which is used in the Church of Rome, and which she enjoins upon pain of excommunication, and for the neglect of which she inflicts the greatest temporal punishments, the same we count sinful, unlawful, contrary to the word of God, and full of superstition and idolatry; as the adoration of the host, images, reliques, and the cross; and the invocation of saints and angels. We do not now enter into the debate whether we herein mistake or not; this, however, is certain, that as long as we are of this mind, we cannot possibly join with a

church that ordains such worship ; for, as the Apostle says in a like case, "What communion hath light with darkness? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"* From whence he immediately draws this inference, in the words of the prophet, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch no unclean thing, saith the Lord."

The force of which reasoning will be increased by the following observations, which we shall only mention. *First*, this difference is not speculative, but altogether practical ; for the whole affair of divine worship turns upon it, and, therefore, nothing can be of greater weight and importance than this matter. *Secondly*, the design of christianity, nay, the very essence and foundation of it, is to reclaim mankind from the worship of creatures, and things which by nature are not God, to the worship of the only true God. Whence it appears to be presumption in those, who, contrary hereunto, attempt to call us off from the true God to the worship of creatures and dumb idols. *Thirdly*, however this worship may be palliated, and speciously defended, yet it is so evident in fact, and the practice of it so publicly allowed of, that it cannot be called into question. *Fourthly*, this argument is as plain as can be ; nothing can be more evident and obvious to the capacity of every one ; there is no need of acuteness and

* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16.

sagacity to discern it. The rule of God's word is very plain on the one hand, and the contrary practice is as obvious on the other.

5. As their errors in doctrine are exceeding gross, and their superstitions in worship not to be borne with, so the tyranny of their government is so great, that we can by no means submit to such a yoke. For here we see the papal monarchy obtained by mere usurpation; laws enacted in perfect opposition to the laws of Christ; dispensations from the divine law readily granted, as in the case of marriages; and absolutions from oaths indulged to kings and princes, to the subversion of all society; such a mass of laws about ceremonies, as does effectually bring us back again to judaism and heathenism; christian liberty entirely abolished, anathemas denounced against those who differ from them even in the most trifling things, as in the number of the sacraments; fines and imprisonments, gibbets, stakes, the inquisition, with the like wholesome severities; all which give us such an abhorrence of the popish communion, that as long as the authority of the Pope continues, we can never think of submitting to his discipline, or of leaving our lives, and the comfort of them, our faith and conscience, at his mercy.

In a word, let them shake off the popish yoke, which the papists themselves begin to be sufficiently sensible is intolerable; let no violence be ever offered to conscience; let all men judge of religion from the

word of God only ; let every thing that savours of idolatry be banished from their worship, and then we shall not be backward, but readily concert measures towards a reconciliation and union with them.

CHAP. IX.

Differences between Protestants not Fundamental.

WE have seen an instance of a fundamental difference ; but the difference of those, who have agreed in shaking off the papal yoke, is quite of another nature ; some of whom, for distinction's sake, are called *Lutherans*, and others *Reformed*. And whosoever calmly and impartially considers the differences amongst them, will easily perceive, that they are by no means such as should hinder mutual forbearance and christian harmony, which has been always greatly wanted, but is more especially necessary to both sides in the present juncture.

And, that we may make our way the more easy, we shall premise three things. *First*, we do not mean that persons should be required to change their opinions, which, as it would be unjust to insist upon, so it would be impossible to accomplish ; but, only that those, who entertain different sentiments, should bear with one another ; which to persons of piety and

moderation ought not to be reckoned any great difficulty. *Secondly*, we are not in this matter to regard the too rigid determinations, or the imprudent writings and expressions, or the odd opinions of particular persons, but only public records, or confessions by princes, or churches, which, whatever authority they may have, yet in the opinion of protestants are not infallible, but are to be judged of by the rule of scripture. *Thirdly*, the opinions of each side are never to be confounded with the consequences of them, whether they be truly or falsely deduced ; and consequences ought never to be charged upon any, who do not own them, but it may be abhor them, unless the case be so plain and palpable, and so universally acknowledged, that no one, who owns the principle, can possibly deny the consequence.

These things being premised, let us see in short how far protestants agree with one another, and in comparison hereof, how small their disagreement is ; whence it will appear how easy, yea, how reasonable and necessary it is for them to come to that forbearance and unity of which we speak.

How considerable and important their agreement is, may be understood by comparing together their *Confessions of faith* ; yea, it is very evident, by considering the *Augsburgh Confession* alone, which both sides receive and acknowledge. Both sides agree that the Word of God contained in the Scriptures, is the only rule of faith, by which rule all

human traditions and sanctions are to be judged of; that the only true God is the object of all religious worship, and that the least show of devotion is not to be paid to angels, or saints, to crosses, or reliques, or to any images of wood, or stone, or the like. Both sides place all their hope of pardon and salvation in Christ alone; in his merits, and promises. Both agree, that the benefits purchased by Christ, and consequently eternal salvation, are not to be obtained but by faith and repentance, and that not by a dead faith, but such as works by love, and by repentance, that is sincere, and demonstrated by a life of good works. Both solemnize the sacraments of baptism, and the Lord's supper, according to the command of Christ, without those many inventions of men, by which these holy mysteries have been greatly abused and corrupted; and so conform themselves to the wholesome institution of Christ, by which his love is ratified to us. Both acknowledge, that prayers and praises, thanksgivings and almsdeeds, our bodies, and even our whole selves, are the true offerings and sacrifices which we are to present unto God, and renounce that unbloody sacrifice, which others have added, as impious and absurd. Both believe, that there are but two ends of all men, eternal glory and eternal misery, and reject that middle state of purgatory, which some, contrary to the Word of God, have devised merely to support their avarice and superstition. And in short, all the principles of the christian

faith, without exception, are received in common on both sides, together with an abhorrence of the errors and superstitions of popery. Nor, indeed, can it be imagined how persons, who seriously consider these things, and are suitably affected, with the importance of them, can be satisfied to break the bond of fellowship, and refrain from worshipping God together, upon account of some few and trivial differences about things that are obscure.

Such is their agreement; in comparison of which, as is now evident, and may easily be proved, their disagreement is small and inconsiderable. We shall not stay here, to take notice of some small differences in ritual matters, as about the use of tapers, images, confession, and exorcism in baptism, which are not the same every where, and ought to be no obstacle to a hearty union; for every church may enjoy its own particular usages, and the observation of these things be left at liberty, and not be obliged to a constant invariable form herein, as is acknowledged in the confessions of both sides; nor shall we touch upon some less differences in matters of opinion, which are either disputes about words only, or peculiar tenets of private divines rather than of whole churches; or, it may be, only consequences drawn from some principles, which are by no means to be charged on the churches themselves. All these things we shall pass over for the present, and briefly give our judgment, and that with freedom

and a desire to promote peace, concerning three principal controversies only, which seem to be all that are of any moment, and which alone use to be regarded in this matter.

The first question, therefore, is, Whether the body of Christ be truly and substantially present in the eucharist ?

Though this at first sight may seem to be a controversy of very great moment, yet, if we look more narrowly into it, and consider what is granted on both sides, we shall have different apprehensions of it ; for both sides grant, that the bread and wine are truly present, and continue all the time of the celebration ; and, therefore, are not converted or transubstantiated into the body of Christ. On the other hand, both sides agree that Christ is truly present, yea, that his body and blood are truly exhibited, and are so far present as the nature of a sacrament requires. They both agree, that the body and blood of Christ are not present in a gross and sensible manner, so as to be included in that place ; that they are not present after the manner of bodies, but after the manner of spirits, or in a spiritual manner ; yea, are no more nor less present than as the nature and end of a sacrament require, and therefore only in a *sacramental manner*, which is an expression admitted and used on both sides. Further, both sides equally condemn the abuses and superstitions of the Church of Rome, as transubstantiation, the

sacrifice of the mass, withholding the cup from the laity, the procession, elevation, and adoration of the host. Finally, both sides are fully satisfied that bodily eating, such as is performed by good and bad men alike, does not avail us to salvation, but only that which is performed by faith. To which purpose one might bring a plain testimony from Luther,* and a no less remarkable one from Brentius;† which, for brevity's sake, we omit. What difference does now remain? Not any concerning the presence itself; for both sides confess, if we would speak accurately, that the body of Christ is only so far present as the nature and end of the sacrament require. All the difference, therefore, is concerning the manner of his presence, one side contenting themselves with believing such a sort of presence as is plain and easy to be conceived, and agreeable to the style of scripture, the other imagining that Christ is present in some wonderful and incomprehensible manner, which to the former seems to be of no manner of use, and attended with unsurmountable difficulties, and therefore they cannot admit of it. This is the whole subject of difference; and what there is in this that affects the foundation of faith in the least, we cannot see, or what should hinder such persons from bearing with one another, till God

* In Catechismo minori.

† In Syngrammate Suevorum; tum in exegesi in Joannem,

grant greater light to those who are under a mistake in the matter.

Neither is there any greater weight in that other question, which arises out of the former, concerning the person of Christ, Whether the divine perfections, such as omnipresence, omnipotence, and the like, are communicated to his human nature? For each side owns all, that is important in this matter, namely, the two natures of Christ, and the union of both, to be without any change, or division, or mixture of either; that the properties of both natures are ascribed to Christ; and, finally, that this mystery of godliness, concerning "God manifest in the flesh," is a thing very sublime, far above the comprehension of men. Other things, which remain doubtful, are so obscure in themselves, and come to little more than a debate about words, that it must be a very hard case, as that excellent man and divine, John Lewis Fabricius,* has observed, and proceed from great want of charity, if persons, who do not exactly agree in such things, cannot regard each other as brethren notwithstanding.

There remains a third controversy, concerning predestination; a matter that was never brought into dispute in Luther's time, nor many years after, but seems to have broke out first in the quarrel between Zanchy and Marbachius, about the year 1561. However, Zanchy did not deny a general will in God

* In Meditatione circa Personam Christi.

to save all men if they believed, as may be seen in his writings;* neither did he teach any thing more rigid about election and reprobation, than Luther himself has done.† This controversy afterwards increased, and is now reckoned by most persons to be the chief of all. But though some branches of it may be greatly magnified, as those questions which are concerning universal and particular grace; Whether election depends upon foreseen faith? Whether the grace of God be resistible or irresistible? And whether believers may fall from grace or not? Yet those, who diligently consider the matter, will see, that upon the whole there is a great agreement between them; and that such as are herein mistaken, though we do not now inquire who they are, may nevertheless be very good christians. For both sides agree, *First*, that God is the author of every good thing; but that all evil comes from ourselves. *Secondly*, that man is a free agent, worthy of honour or reproach, and inexcusable whenever he sins against God. *Thirdly*, that every man, who believes and repents, is readily accepted of God; and that it is very pleasing to him for any one thus to believe and repent. *Fourthly*, that all, who perish, do so through their own fault; that God is not at all wanting to them, or any way accessory hereunto; and, therefore, that their destruction is no way

* Depuls. Calumn.

† In Lib. de Servo Arbitrio, aliisque in locis.

to be charged upon him. *Fifthly*, that nothing comes to pass in time, but what was determined or permitted to be in the eternal decrees of God. *Sixthly*, that God did by one most simple act thus decree all things. *Seventhly*, that God will render to every man according to his works, and proceed in the judgment of all with the greatest equity, wisdom, and clemency. And, *lastly*, that in all these questions concerning the ways and counsels of God, there are many things, which are far above our comprehension, many things, the reasons and manner of which we cannot account for. And here both sides are ready to cry out in the words of the Apostle, "O the depths," &c. and acknowledge that they are very well adapted to this controversy.

To all which if we add the following things; *first*, that Luther has spoken as harshly of these things, if not more so, than any of the reformed. *Secondly*, that Melancthon, who had far more moderate sentiments in these things, and whom the Lutherans do now follow, did nevertheless maintain great friendship with both Luther and Calvin as long as they lived. *Thirdly*, that many of the reformed divines, as Bullinger, that great man, and superintendant of Zurich, did plainly approach to Melancthon's judgment,* for which reason he was said to *melancthonise*. *Fourthly*, that a great part of the

* As may be seen in several of his works, but especially in his Oration "de Moderatione servandâ in negotio Prædestinationis," &c.

reformed at present, namely, almost all the English bishops, the divines of Brandenburg, and many others, do either agree with the Lutherans in these points, or come very near them. *Fifthly*, that those of the reformed, that are most rigid in their notions of predestination, abhor every impious consequence, that may be deduced from thence, and follow after holiness themselves, and urge it upon others as much as any. If all these things were considered and duly weighed by a pious and peaceable mind, it would appear, that arduous and sublime questions about predestination ought by no means to separate men in affection from one another, and to hinder love and concord; but every man should enjoy his own opinions without raising jealousies, and molesting others upon such matters; much less would one expect, that the communion of the church, and the common rights of christians, should be suspended upon so perplexed and obscure a point.

What has been said concerning the small importance of such controversies, and the reasonableness of exercising forbearance in these things, will receive further confirmation by observing what follows, which we shall but mention, and leave to the pious and peaceable christian to consider and enlarge upon; *first*, that all these questions reside in the understanding only, and have little or no influence upon our worship and practice; for which reason we easily may, and certainly ought to bear with one another's dif-

ferent sentiments. *Secondly*, that they are things above common capacities, and indeed little more than scholastic questions. *Thirdly*, there are many christians on both sides, who, it may be, have never heard of these disputes, or understand very little of them, or are mistaken about them, or who are doubtful, and never could assent either way; and whether these are to be debarred the hope of salvation, or to be excluded from the communion of the church, we desire our Lutheran brethren calmly to consider. *Fourthly*, the dispute is not so much about things themselves, as the mode and circumstances of them; as has been already observed. *Fifthly*, these questions do not so much concern good men as bad, that is, the admission of persons unworthy, and God's decrees concerning the reprobate. Why should not we therefore pass by them, and make it our business to be found in the number of the faithful? *Sixthly*, both sides design well; therefore if they do not merit praise, they ought however to be excused. *Seventhly*, too much of human frailty has been very visible in these disputes already, preposterous zeal, intemperate anger, and too plain instances of ambition and vainglory. These passions have too much prevailed, and it is high time now to allay and suppress them. *Eighthly*, there are exceeding great and almost insuperable difficulties on both sides, especially about the doctrine of predestination. *Ninthly*, the controversy about predestination has

been debated in all ages, in all places, and by persons of all persuasions. *Tenthly*, there have been great and considerable men on both sides, men that we cannot easily condemn, and should be loth to reject from our communion ; such as St. Chrysostom, and the fathers of the first ages on one side, and St. Austin, with a vast number of followers on the other. Should these men be raised, and live again in our day, how readily should we embrace them ! At least, we could not think of casting them out of the church, and debarring them the offices of it. *Eleventhly*, we may learn wisdom in this matter from our very adversaries, the papists, who, though they are generally very rigid, and the greatest enemies to toleration, yet, in this very affair, and in things of greater moment too, bear with one another's different sentiments, and retain both parties in their communion. *Twelfthly*, the questions, which are now the matter of debate, were quite left out of the Augsburgh Confession, as was acknowledged by divines of both sides in the conference at Leipsic. *Thirteenthly*, there are many other differences of opinion, not only of equal importance, but far greater, which yet are patiently borne with on both sides ; and why should not the like moderation be used in these ? *Lastly*, to add no more, I would only ask one thing ; can it be any where shown, that God, the "only Lawgiver," and "who alone has power to save and to destroy," has ever determined that those

doctrines, which are controverted among protestants, are necessary to be known, in one or other determinate sense, in order to salvation? Or that the opposite errors do exclude men from salvation? To say that he has, would show great rashness, and betray a mind blinded with party zeal. But if the great Judge of the world has determined no such thing, what arrogance is it for such as we to desire to be thought more righteous and more rigid than God himself?

Hitherto, therefore, it has been plainly shown, that there is so great an agreement among protestants, and that their disagreement is so inconsiderable, that they may very well exercise mutual forbearance, and enter into a hearty union with one another. But we shall go a step further, and venture to assert, that this is not a matter left to our liberty, but of the utmost necessity and most strict obligation, whether we regard conscience or prudence. And first, with regard to conscience; for, if this disagreement does not hinder but persons, who so differ, may be good christians, and true members of the church, communion must necessarily be held with them; which, if we deny, we are guilty of violating the great law of charity, and of rending asunder the body of Christ; for Christ has declared that all his disciples *should be one*; and St. Paul directs, that the “*unity of the spirit be kept in the bond of peace* ;” as we have endeavoured to show

in chapter seventh, by a great number and force of arguments. But no one has pressed this matter more strongly, as far as it concerns the controversies that are among protestants, than the most pious and great lover of peace, Samuel Werenfels, to whose excellent treatise we refer the reader.*

But such a union is no less necessary from the laws of prudence, than from the obligations of duty and conscience ; for, who can be ignorant how many evils have sprung up from the violation of it ? What hatred, strife, and wars ; what a pernicious custom of endless debates and slander ; what loss of time ; what a visible decay of piety and charity ; what a hindrance to reformation ; and what triumphs of the papists and other adversaries ; when all the good effects, contrary to these evils, might be procured by the agreement we have been recommending.

However, lest any one should pretend that what we have been proposing is indeed an excellent and laudable design, and greatly to be desired, but no more likely ever to be accomplished, than squaring the circle, or finding the philosopher's stone ; this difficulty, though it be not altogether imaginary, yet we shall remove it in a few words. For what hinders, but that which has formerly and elsewhere been often accomplished, if not in all churches, nor perhaps upon a lasting foundation, yet in many

* *Considerationes generales de Ratione uniendi Ecclesias Protestantas.*

places, and at divers times, may be effected again, nay, and become universal? There are several known instances of such a union, which are before every one's eyes, namely, at Marpurg, 1529; at Wittenburg, 1536; at Sendomir, and other places of Poland and Bohemia, 1570 and the following years; at Leipsic, 1631; at Charenton the same year; at Cassel 1661; and at Koningsberg in Prussia not long since. To these we may add many acts of the diets in Germany, from the beginning of the reformation, even to the present times, in which the reformed have been acknowledged as brethren of the Augsburg confession, and are still so accounted. To all which may be added innumerable writings of princes and states, churches and universities, as likewise pious and moderate men on both sides, who have endeavoured to persuade to such a union, to promote and recommend it, and laid down proper methods to effect it. And the famous and learned Christ. Matth. Pfalfius, a divine of Tubingen, has very lately professed himself to be of the number of such pious persons, and lovers of peace, with great honour, and the applause of all good men, for as to any small difference that remains, it is not worthy to be regarded; who declares, "That the coalition of protestants has hitherto been prevented, not through any defect in the thing itself, but through the faults of men."* And elsewhere

* Dissert. de Articulis Fundamentalibus.

he judiciously examines into the importance of those controversies that are among protestants, and shows they are not fundamental.*

CHAP. X.

Advices to promote Agreement and Forbearance.

WHAT remains, is only to add some short advices, which may be of use towards effecting this agreement and forbearance; which we shall submit to the examination of all pious readers, and lovers of peace.

1. It is necessary for all to preserve a true and just sense of christianity continually in mind; not such as is made up of some obscure notions, or scholastic niceties, but which consists in the new creature, that is, in true piety and real virtue.

2. The importance of all doctrines and controversies ought to be carefully examined by the word of God, and by the laws of prudence, that a mountain may not be made of a mole hill, nor hay and stubble be made the foundation of christianity.

3. When matters are really obscure and doubtful, our assent ought to be withheld; we should not be wise above what is written, but use caution and

* Instituti. Theologic. Dogmat. & Moral.

sobriety, according to the measure of light, which God has granted us.

4. It is to be desired, that we may never suffer that first, and truly fundamental principle of the reformation, *That the Holy Scripture is the only rule of our faith*, to be forgotten ; and consequently, that we may never subject our faith to any assemblies of men, or to any human decisions, whatever authority or learning they may be possessed of ; but that we may try all things, whatever they may be, by the rule of God's word.

5. We ought always to bear in mind, that we ourselves are very liable to err ; and so we shall not be too tenacious of the opinions we have formerly entertained, but be always ready to receive further light, and hearken to the admonitions of others.

6. All those questions, that are disputed among protestants, which surmount the capacities of common people, and contribute nothing towards promoting piety, or holiness, ought never to be referred to them.

7. And when such questions are disputed in schools, it ought to be with the utmost modesty and humility ; and at the same time it ought to be shown that these things do not belong to the foundation of faith.

8. In such questions, and all that are equally intricate, the very words of scripture ought to be used, as much as possible, and the notions and terms

of the schoolmen ought with equal care to be avoided ; by which method we shall proceed with greater safety to ourselves, we shall stop the mouths of gainsayers, and make the way to the union of the church more plain and easy to all.

9. Our moderation should be uniform towards all men, and in all places alike ; that it may not be objected to us, that we are disposed to peaceable measures with our fellow christians abroad, but rigid and morose towards those with whom we live.

10. Let us continually endeavour to obtain further measures of piety and holiness, and to grow confirmed therein ; and also, to instil the same into others, which is the crown of all ; by which means we shall find no time for vain and unprofitable questions, “ which minister nothing to edification.”

11. We ought to have that fundamental precept of Christ our Lord always before our eyes, whereby he has so strictly enjoined all his disciples *to love one another*, and to put it into practice towards our dissenting brethren. For we must not imagine that these little diversities of opinions among us, are a sufficient excuse for the breach of charity.

12. Our charity must not be shown by speaking and acting in a private manner only ; but when occasion offers, and our brethren consent, we should readily join with them at the holy communion. For why should not this solemn commemoration of our Lord’s death, and this peculiar expression of chris-

tian charity, be left in common to all, who agree with us in the principal parts of christianity, though they differ in some minute and circumstantial articles.

Lastly, as it is incumbent upon us to behave ourselves in such a manner, so we ought in our several stations, and according to the influence we have, both by our words and actions, to instil the same spirit of meekness into others. Let princes, magistrates and ministers, do each their part, and then we may hope, that these seeds of moderation and forbearance, being watered by the dew of heaven, will happily spring up, and bring forth the most pleasant fruit, to the glory of God, the edification and union of the church, and our own eternal salvation, according to the Apostle, "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."*

* James iii. 18.

ESSAYS OF ABAUZIT.



ABAUZIT.

FIRMIN ABAUZIT, the author of the following Essays, was descended from an Arabian family, which settled in the south of France as early as the ninth century. He was born at Uzes, in the Department of Gard, November 11th, 1679. His father died during the son's infancy, and he was left to the charge of his mother at a time of great trouble and peril. His parents professed the protestant faith, and he was only six years old when the memorable revocation of the edict of Nantes threatened to extinguish the flame of religious liberty, and to crush all the Protestants in France under the weight of an ecclesiastical tyranny, or to torture them with the iron rod of persecution.

The Roman Catholic priests of his native town wished to force him from his mother, and to educate him in their college. She at first eluded their attempts by sending him secretly from home. His place of residence, however, was discovered, and he was brought back and compelled to reside in the

college, till his mother found means effectually to release him from the hands of her persecutors, and remove him beyond their reach. After wandering for a long time in concealment among the mountains of Cevennes, he at length found an asylum in Geneva. His mother was seized, in revenge of his escape, and confined in the castle of Somieres where she was treated with such severity as to be thrown into a fever, which nearly terminated her life. After suffering in confinement two years, she gained her liberty, and hastened to Geneva, where she had the joy of meeting her son, and the happiness of retaining her religious opinions unmolested.

During her persecutions in France, she had been deprived of almost all her fortune, which was once considerable, and she was left with a scanty provision for the education of her son. By practising a rigid economy, however, and teaching him to copy her example, she contrived to procure for him all the advantages, which the schools of Geneva afforded. He engaged with such eagerness in his studies, as ensured him a rapid progress, and soon made him master not only of polite learning and literature in general, but of several branches of science and philosophy. For a time he was particularly devoted to theology, but antiquities, the exacter sciences, natural philosophy, mathematics, and natural history, were his more favourite topics. He also made great proficiency in the ancient languages.

After having thus successfully pursued his studies at Geneva, he travelled into Holland before he was twenty years old. There he became acquainted with some of the first literary men of the age, especially Bayle, Jurieu, and the Basnages. From Holland he went over to England, where he also had the good fortune to enjoy the society and esteem of men of great eminence, among whom were St. Evremond, and Sir Isaac Newton. So favourable an impression did he make, that King William wished to retain him in England, and proposed to him very advantageous conditions. But his mother was in Geneva, and filial affection called on him to reject every offer, which would deprive her of his immediate protection. He went again into Holland, and, after a short excursion in Germany, returned to Geneva where he fixed his permanent residence. The freedom of the city was presented to him, and he was solicited to accept a professor's chair, which he declined. He consented, however, to fill the office of librarian. At different times he was member of the legislative body of the little republic of Geneva, the duties of which office he discharged with great wisdom and discretion.

But the departments of knowledge, to which he seemed to be more peculiarly devoted, were the natural sciences. He was well known to all the distinguished mathematicians and philosophers in Europe. The philosophical principles of Newton

early engaged his attention, and found in him an able and zealous advocate. He defended them against the attacks of Fontenelle and Castel, and even detected an error in the *Principia* at a time when very few men in Europe could understand the work. This error was acknowledged by Sir Isaac Newton himself, and corrected in a subsequent edition. He had so high an opinion of the merits of Abauzit, that he held a correspondence with him, and in one of his letters pays him this compliment; "You are a very fit man to judge between Leibnitz and me."

Abauzit was, also, profoundly versed in ancient history, geography, and chronology; and drew several maps and charts, which threw much light on these subjects. Sir Isaac Newton altered an important date in his chronology in conformity with the opinion of Abauzit. His knowledge, indeed, was extensive in the whole circle of antiquities, and in almost every branch of human attainment. In proof of this a remarkable instance is mentioned by his biographers. Soon after Rousseau had written the article on the Music of the Ancients in the Encyclopedia, for which purpose he had consulted the books in the French king's library, he had an accidental conversation with Abauzit, whom he found so well informed on the subject, that he supposed him to have just finished an investigation. "It is ten years," replied Abauzit, "since I quitted this branch of science." This is an evidence, among many others, that his memory

was not inferior to his ardour, his judgment, or his industry.

In theology his researches were deep. His knowledge of the ancient languages qualified him to be a critic ; and his good judgment, moderation, and love of truth, enabled him to throw off the trammels of prejudice, and enter upon his inquiries with a fair mind. The results, for the most part, were rational views of the christian religion, and a spirit of toleration and forbearance rarely to be found at that period. His theological writings consist chiefly of short articles on various subjects. They were collected and printed in a volume separate from his other works. The longest of these is on the Apocalypse, which was drawn up at the request of William Burnet, Governour of New York, who was one of Abauzit's correspondents. In this article the author inquires into the manner in which the canon of the New Testament was formed, and states at some length the opinions of all the ancient Fathers respecting the authenticity of the Apocalypse. The same volume contains a treatise on Idolatry, and a letter on the Doctrine of the Romish Church, both of which manifest much depth of research, and close reflection.

From this volume, which was translated by Dr. Harwood, and printed in London, 1774, the Essays here given to the public are selected. It is unnecessary to remark on their object, or their merits, as every reader can judge for himself. They exhibit

the views of a great and a good man on some of the most important topics of christian theology.

It would be unpardonable, perhaps, not to introduce here the glowing portraiture, which Rousseau has drawn of Abauzit, more especially as it is said to be the only eulogium, that ever escaped this author's pen upon a living person.

“Not that this age of philosophy,” said Rousseau, “will pass without having produced one true philosopher. I know one, and only one, I confess; but what I consider the highest point of happiness is, that he dwells in my native country. Shall I dare openly name him, whose true glory it is to have remained unknown? Wise and modest Abauzit, let your sublime simplicity pardon in my heart a zeal, which has not your fame for its object. No, it is not you, that I would make known in this age so unworthy to admire you; it is Geneva, which I would make illustrious by your residence there; on my fellow citizens I would bestow the honour, which they render to you. Happy is the country where the merit, which conceals itself, is the most esteemed; happy the people where presumptuous youth ceases to dogmatize, and blushes at its vain knowledge, before the learned ignorance of the wise. Venerable and virtuous old man, your fame has never been sounded by empty wits; no noisy Academician has attempted your elogy. You have not, like them, deposited all your wisdom in books; you

have displayed it in your life for an example to the country, which you have adopted and loved, and by which you are respected. You have lived like Socrates ; but he died by the hand of his fellow citizens, while you are cherished by yours.”*

Such was the tribute bestowed by a man of genius, who was by no means accustomed to over-rate the merits of others.

Abauzit died on the 20th of March, 1767, at the advanced age of eighty seven, deeply lamented by his friends and the republic. Through his whole life he sought retirement and quiet. It was his delight rather to communicate pleasure to his friends, than to gain the applause of the world ; his conversation was animated and instructive, and his deportment affable and engaging. He was amiable and modest, generous and kind, without any selfish interests to promote, or dreams of ambition to realize. He was simple in his manners, frank and independent in his intercourse with men, decided in his opinions, a lover of liberty, and a friend to universal freedom and toleration in religion. If, indeed, it can be said of any man, that in him were combined the characters of a true philosopher, a profound scholar, and a sincere christian, this may with the strictest truth be said of Abauzit.

* Œuvres de J. J. Rousseau, Genève, 1782, tom. v. p. 258.

ESSAYS OF ABAUZIT.

On Mysteries in Religion.

MYSTERIES are a source of disputation and of division among christians. Some would totally banish them from religion ; others, not content with those which it may admit, create themselves a pleasure in augmenting the number of them, and multiply them to infinity. What side ought one to take in this dispute ? Is there no middle path to pursue, between these two opposite extremes ? This is what I design to canvass in the ensuing discourse. To this purpose we will first observe the different senses which this word *mystery* may admit. Secondly, we will examine in what sense we may say that there are mysteries in religion ; and in what manner one is obliged to submit to those which it contains. In the last place, we will deduce from the principles laid down, some general reflections on the conduct which christians ought to observe with regard to mysteries.

The word *mystery* in general signifies a *thing concealed* ; but as a thing may be concealed from

us different ways, this name is attributed to various things which are not equally concealed from us, and which have not, with regard to us, the same degree of obscurity.

1. The sacred penmen gave the name of *mystery* to those truths, which revelation discovers to us, and which would have been unknown to men had they enjoyed only the guidance of reason. Thus the doctrine of the vocation of the Gentiles to the privileges of the Gospel is called a mystery ; because that before Jesus Christ had commanded his Apostles to preach the Gospel through the whole world, this design, which God had formed, of manifesting himself to all men, was a thing unknown, a thing concealed. In this sense it is that St. Paul, informing the Christians that all mankind shall not be dead when Jesus Christ shall descend to judge the world, calls this doctrine a *mystery*, because that was a particular circumstance, with regard to the last judgment, which mankind had been ignorant of till that time ; it had been a thing concealed from them till the time that St. Paul informed them of it. It is in this sense that the word *mystery* is most frequently employed in the books of the New Testament.

2. The name of *mystery* is also given to those doctrines of religion, which acquaint us but imperfectly with those subjects, which they present to our minds ; which only communicate to us insufficient

ideas. It is in this sense, that one may say, that the conduct of Providence is a *mystery* ; because, though we know various things concerning the manner in which Providence governs this universe, we are very far from knowing all the rules, which it observes in this great regard.

3. We give the name of *mystery* to what is obscure and unknown to us in the things that relate to religion. We do not know, for example, in what time God will make his Gospel known to those nations, which hitherto have been plunged in the darkness of paganism ; this to us, we say, is a *mystery*. We are ignorant also, for instance, in what manner God will judge those who shall have fallen into this or that error, which appears dangerous to us ; in this we acknowledge a *mystery*. We are ignorant what motive influenced the Deity to communicate his Gospel to one nation rather than to another at a certain time ; on this subject we say, with St. Paul, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !

4. Divines give the name of *mystery* to certain doctrines, which are, say they, above reason, and which reason cannot comprehend. In this sense they style the doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation a *mystery*.

5. There are divines, who make use of this word to denote doctrines, which are not only incom-

prehensible but even contradictory. It is in this sense that the Roman Catholics call their transubstantiation a *mystery*.

In fine, the word *mystery* is sometimes employed to denote in general the truths of religion. It seems even that the scripture sometimes makes use of it in this sense. Thus Christ said to his disciples ; "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," that is, to know the truths of my Gospel, which remain concealed from the rest of mankind. "Let every one regard us," says St. Paul, "as stewards of the mysteries of Christ," meaning of those truths, which Jesus Christ came to teach men, and of which the greatest part of men are ignorant. "We speak to you the wisdom of God in a mystery ;" that is, we publish an excellent institution, which God has revealed to us, and the greatest part of whose truths was before unknown to the world. These are things, which eye hath not seen, as he afterwards adds, nor ear heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive.

The Jews and Pagans were fallen into such dreadful darkness of ignorance and error, that the greatest part of the truths, even the most plain and obvious, which the Apostles preached to them, were mysteries to them ; truths which they had been ignorant of till that time, and for the knowledge of which they were indebted to the Apostles. For which reason it is, that these last sometimes give the

name of *mystery* to the truths which they deliver, whatever may be their nature ; because being unknown, they were *mysteries* to the people to whom they were communicated. To take the word *mystery* in this general sense, all religion will be full of *mysteries*, since in this sense they give the name of *mystery* to all the truths which it contains, even to the plainest, and to those which are the most level to our capacity. But this is not the business in hand. The question is to know, if, by taking this word in the other senses which we have indicated, we can aver that there are mysteries in religion. This is what we shall immediately examine.

1. First, then, if by *mysteries* are understood truths which revelation discovers, and which were unknown to us by reason, it is certain that there are various mysteries of this kind in the Christian religion. Those truths, for example, that Jesus Christ is the saviour of men ; that he passed his life in an abject condition ; that he died upon a cross ; that he is risen again ; that he ascended into heaven ; that he shed from thence the effusions of the spirit upon the Apostles ; that he will come one day to judge the whole world ; that all the dead shall rise to make their appearance together at his tribunal ; and several other truths of this nature, are things of which our reason could not inform us, and which we have learned solely from christianity. They are therefore all of them so many *mysteries*, which the Gospel

hath revealed to us. But it ought to be remarked, that *after* this revelation these *mysteries* cease to be mysteries ; they are no longer things concealed ; they are things which we know as accurately as those truths, which are best known to us by reason ; they are secrets which cease to be secrets to us, from the moment that God has been pleased to impart them to us. One ought not to make any difficulty in receiving mysteries of this kind, which one may find in the books of the New Testament. The divinity of these books once proved, we ought to receive all the truths in which they instruct us in a clear and accurate manner, though reason of itself would not conduct us to those truths.

2. If by *mystery* we understand doctrines, which only give us inadequate ideas of the subjects, which they present to our minds, it is certain that there are diverse *mysteries* of this nature in religion. All the perfections of God, all his works, our own nature, are in this respect *mysteries*. We have only very imperfect ideas of all these things. What the scripture delivers to us on these topics, is not sufficient to give us a perfect knowledge of these great objects. At present, says St. Paul, we see but in part, we see through a glass darkly. There is in almost all things, which are the objects of religion, a bright and dark side. In this respect then, there are almost every where *mysteries*. But what ought to be remarked is, that we are obliged to receive of these

mysterious doctrines only what is clear in them, and what is level to our capacities. We are obliged to view them only on the luminous side, which they exhibit to us. We ought not, neither can we contemplate them on the dark, by which they are inaccessible to us. I will render this reflection perceptible by an instance. One may regard eternity as a *mystery*. In eternity there are circumstances we cannot comprehend. How is it possible, for example, to add always to a duration which is already infinite? If a being hath existed from all eternity, it seems that he must have existed an infinite number of years, an infinite number of days. Are there then as many years as days in the immense extent of his duration? These are difficulties which extremely embarrass us on this subject. This is the dark side of this doctrine, on which we are not obliged to pronounce. But there is in the eternity of God something clear, and of which we easily form an idea; that is, that God hath always existed, and that he will always exist; that he hath had no beginning, and will never have an end; and this is all we are obliged to believe on this subject. With regard to *mysteries* of this nature, therefore, we ought to receive what they exhibit to us clearly, and to suspend our judgment in acknowledging our ignorance in regard to what is obscure in them.

3. If by *mystery* is understood what is obscure and unknown to us in the things of religion, it is very

certain that there are, as we have just remarked, various things which are unknown to us, among those things in which religion is conversant. But those things which are unknown to us, make no part of religion. They have not been revealed to us. Since they continue to be unknown and concealed from us, they constitute no part of the revelation, which hath been granted us ; they ought not, they cannot be the object of our faith.

4. If one understand by *mystery*, incomprehensible doctrines, there are no *mysteries* of this kind in revelation. It is even a contradiction to say that a doctrine is revealed, and that it is incomprehensible. To say that God reveals to us incomprehensible doctrines, is to say that he gives us ideas of things of which we can form no idea, and of which he does not really give us any idea. This is absolutely impossible. If there were doctrines of this nature in religion, it would be altogether impossible to believe them. For to believe a doctrine, is to connect the ideas which can be formed concerning this doctrine. But one has no idea of an incomprehensible doctrine ; one cannot therefore connect the ideas, which constitute this doctrine, nor consequently believe it.

We must make the same judgment concerning contradictory, as concerning incomprehensible doctrines. It is a sort of pretended *mystery*, which cannot have place in a divine revelation. It is impossible that God, who is the author of our reason,

should teach us by his word, things directly contrary to those, which he teaches us by clear and evident reasonings. It would not even be possible for us to receive these kinds of doctrine. For to believe, as I have just said, is to connect ideas. Now the ideas, that one pretends to unite in a contradictory doctrine, cannot be connected. They destroy one another. If one affirmed, for example, that one and the same body is at Paris and at Rome at the same time, it would not be possible to believe it. I may, indeed, through weakness, through complaisance, through the little attention which I give to what is proposed to me, say, that I give my consent to this proposition. I can join together the words of which it is composed, but my mind cannot connect the ideas, which these words express. It cannot connect the idea of a body existing at Paris at a certain time, with the idea of this same body existing at the same instant at Rome. In asserting that this body is at Rome, one denies that it is at Paris; in asserting that it is at Paris, he denies it to be at Rome. These two ideas, which one pretends to connect, destroy each other.*

* The difference between the sense of the word *μυστήριον*, *mystery*, as used by the Apostles, and its popular sense, is clear and easily defined. The Apostles always meant by the word something that was *concealed*, but which might be made known; whereas, in its vulgar signification, it is employed to denote a thing, which is not only concealed, but *incomprehensible*. This difference is broad and important, and deserves the careful atten-

The principles, which we have just laid down, obviously suggest the following reflections, on the conduct which we ought to observe, with regard to mysteries.

1. It appears by what we have advanced, in what manner we ought to receive doctrines, which men present to us under the idea of *mystery*; that if they give us clear ideas of what they are desirous we should believe, and make us evidently see that these ideas are contained in the word of God, we ought not to hesitate in receiving them, though they should be things, which our reason of itself could not have discovered to us. The scripture says, for example, that the dead must one day rise again. We easily form ideas of what the scripture has taught us in this regard. We ought to believe it, though our reason of itself cannot lead us to this truth. But if people propose to us as *mysteries*, doctrines that are incomprehensible or contradictory, we ought not to suffer ourselves to be dazzled with the specious title with which they clothe them. We

tion of every one, who would attain just conceptions of the Apostles' instructions. It may be stated as a rule, which is without exception, that they never used the term to express any truth or doctrine, which was in its nature incomprehensible, or impossible to be understood. On the contrary, it is uniformly employed by them to denote something, which had been obscure, or unknown, but which was made clear by revelation, or would be made so by the means that were employed to diffuse a knowledge of truth, and of divine things. ED.

ought to reject them without any scruple. It is not possible in truth to receive them. One must only examine carefully if the doctrine in question be in reality incomprehensible. Sometimes this title is imprudently given to doctrines, which are not of this order. For example, people say that the doctrine of the incarnation is incomprehensible, but they are mistaken. If it were, it could not be received. The doctrine is briefly this ; That the Deity in a very intimate manner was united to the man Christ Jesus, insomuch that one may regard all those excellent lessons, which Jesus Christ communicated to mankind, all the astonishing and miraculous operations, which he displayed before their eyes, as the language and actions of God himself, who was in him, who spoke by him, who acted by him, who manifested himself by him. Here is nothing but what is easily comprehended. It is true, one does not comprehend what was precisely the nature of this union of the Deity with humanity ; but as we are not obliged to form distinct ideas of it, we are not obliged to believe what we do not distinctly comprehend of it.

2. It appears from what we have said, that it is injurious to accuse moderate divines of being enemies to *mysteries*. One may see by what we have advanced agreeably to their ideas, that they reject not those *mysteries*, which in reality belong to religion. They acknowledge, in the strongest manner, that

there are in the nature of God many things which transcend our weak capacity. They receive with devout regard every thing which revelation hath added, which reason could not discover. But they do not blindly submit to the decisions of men, who would often vend those doctrines for mysteries, which have no other foundation but their own imaginations. It is against *these* pretended mysteries that they declare war, and not against *those* which religion contains. Penetrated with gratitude and esteem for the truths which the Gospel teaches them, they cannot suffer that men should contaminate their sacred purity, by associating with them doctrines which are absurd, replete with difficulties and contradictions. One might with much more justice accuse the rigid divines with being enemies to *mysteries*. It is doing great injury to true *mysteries*, to unite with them, as they too often do, abstract speculations, loaded with difficulties and contradictions, which render religion contemptible, which make real mysteries to be questioned, which, exhibiting religion under a disadvantageous form, weaken the esteem which men ought to cherish for it, and occasion doubts to arise concerning its credibility.

Besides, it appears from the facility with which these divines pronounce on all kinds of subjects, that they own much fewer *mysteries*, than those whom they reproach with being enemies to mysteries. Is it asked, for example, in what manner God hath

predestinated mankind to salvation? A moderate divine will tell you, that the only thing that he knows upon this subject is, that God hath determined to save those who shall believe in Jesus Christ, and to condemn those who shall refuse to receive him. He will confess that he knows no more than this concerning it, that this affair is to him a *mystery*. But the rigid divine will not be content with such a concise account; he will gradually unfold to you all the most hidden secrets of this *mystery*; will tell you which is the *first* decree which God formed in this respect, which the second, and which the third, fourth, and fifth. You would suppose he had known the secret counsels of the Almighty, so little is he embarrassed with this subject, and with such facility he pronounces on what creates to others the greatest difficulties.

Is it inquired, what shall be the final condition of the heathens, who have not the happiness of knowing Jesus Christ? What shall be the everlasting state of those, who have fallen into such and such an error? A moderate divine will say, that he leaves them to the equitable judgment of God, the sole legislator, who can save and who can destroy; he will say, that he hath not sufficient light to decide, in any peremptory manner, the fate of the erroneous; that this is to him a *mystery*. But a severe divine, far from adopting this *mystery*, will directly pronounce the sentence, which they shall assuredly

receive at the last day, and condemn them all without mercy. An observer of characters will find, that the moderate divine suspends his judgment on an infinite number of subjects, and freely owns that they are *mysteries* to him; whilst the rigid, by his temerity in determining every thing, annihilates divers *mysteries*, which the weakness of his understanding ought to make him acknowledge.

3. A third reflection, which presents itself on this subject, is, that the more mysterious a doctrine is, full of obscurity and difficult of comprehension, the less important it is to salvation. In effect, a doctrine is not important in religion, but in proportion to the influence it may have on our sanctification. But a doctrine, full of obscurity, can have but very little influence on our hearts. As it presents to us but few ideas, and those ideas very indistinct, it can make but a very slight impression upon us. One may even assert here, that if there were among the doctrines of religion, *mysteries* incomprehensible, these mysteries would be of no importance; that not presenting any distinct idea to our mind, they could not act upon it, nor, consequently, contribute to its sanctification, and its happiness.

4. A fourth reflection, which we ought to make here, is, that one ought to be very circumspect in the judgments, which he delivers concerning mysteries in religion. We ought to assert nothing but what reason and scripture teach us in a clear and accurate

manner. To give here free scope to imagination, to be eager to decide every thing, is to put one's self in evident danger of being deceived. One then walks in a dark region ; he has no light to direct his steps. If he refuses to stop, he runs a risk of wandering from the path, of stumbling every moment, and being precipitated into error.

5. Another reflection, which naturally follows from our principles, is, that we ought to entertain great candour towards those who fall into any error with regard to *mysteries*. They are in truth guilty of imprudence and temerity. They are wrong in hazarding a decision on these matters, without having a sufficient light by which to form a clear judgment. But still, the subjects, on which their opinions are erroneous, are very difficult ; it is not easy to gain clear and exact ideas of them. The difficulty of the matter in question requires, that we should exercise indulgence and charity towards them. If the point were concerning things obvious and evident, on which it was easy to determine, one would have some reason to censure them for the bad use they made of their understanding. They have no excuse, who suffer themselves to be deceived on subjects, which have nothing in them but what is simple and level to our capacity. But the more difficult a matter is, the more easy is it to be deceived in our judgments concerning it, and the more lenity and candour ought we to cherish towards those, who have the misfortune

to wander from the truth, on subjects so susceptible of error and misapprehension.

6. Another reflection, which we will add on this subject, is, that they are not the difficult and abstract doctrines of religion, which ought to attract most of our attention and study. Such doctrines are but of little use and importance. Though we should meditate on them from morning to night, they would contribute but very little to the illumination of our minds, and the satisfaction of our hearts. We should become neither much wiser nor much better. That, which ought most to occupy us, is the meditation of those plain and clear truths, which our religion contains. It is the study of these truths, which, by the light they diffuse in our minds, are efficacious in sanctifying our hearts; it is the study and practice of our duties; it is this which ought to constitute our principal study, and our principal employment. In this regard we ought to follow that excellent maxim recorded in Deuteronomy; "Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things that are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, in order that we may observe all the words of this law."

But men have too much passion for *mysteries* easily to acquire the moderation we here request of them. They will have *mysteries*, that may serve to occupy, to exercise, and to call forth their genius. To cure them of this affection, which they have for speculative doctrines, the contemplation of which is

a very useless employment, one must point out to them subjects better suited to their capacities, and on which they may exercise their understandings with profit and advantage. Several of this kind we might indicate to them. There are, for example, in morality several nice and abstruse points, on which we can acquire but imperfect ideas. These are *mysteries*, into which it would be proper to make deep researches ; it would be very useful to labour assiduously here, in order to gain precision and accuracy, that we may not be embarrassed on the part we are to take, when we shall find ourselves in situations, which require a clear perception of these things. There are in the heart of man many depths, which it would be useful for us frequently to sound. “The heart of man,” says the scripture, “is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; who can know it ?” In general we know ourselves but very imperfectly. We ought to labour to acquire as accurate a knowledge of ourselves as possible. We ought to endeavour to discover what is the situation of our hearts ; what are the passions that commonly agitate them ; what are the objects which make the deepest impression upon them, and which serve to excite the passions. We ought to endeavour to discover the vain illusions which we cherish, and by which we confirm ourselves every day in bad habits. These are *mysteries of iniquity*, which merit all our attention.

There are in the different bodies, which compose this universe, infinite vestiges of the wisdom of their Creator, which, through the slight attention which we pay to them, make no impression upon us. These are mysteries of nature, which well deserve our most sedulous study. We ought to make it our highest entertainment to survey, in the various objects that surround us, the traces of divine skill, which they exhibit to all attentive minds, in order to be elevated by these means to those sentiments of admiration, which we ought always to cherish for the perfections of the supreme Being.

There are in the conduct, which God hath observed in regard to his church, there are in the favours which he hath lavished on mankind by the mission of Jesus Christ, *mysteries* of wisdom, of benevolence, of goodness, of holiness, of power, which we can never sufficiently admire. St. Peter informs us, "that the angels themselves desire to look into these things." We ought not to be possessed with less of this sacred ardour than they, in order to furnish ourselves with just ideas of the wisdom, goodness, and power, which God Almighty hath manifested in the great work of our salvation. We can never entertain ideas of it too exalted, or enter into all the sentiments of admiration and gratitude, which are adequate to the benefits which God has conferred upon us. What idea soever we form of the benevolence, which God has testified to us by Jesus

Christ, there will always be a great number of circumstances that will escape us, and which a second meditation will make us perceive. There will always be in the love of God mysteries, which will exercise our minds. We ought frequently to meditate on this important subject, in order to endeavour to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length, the depth and height of the love of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge. These are *mysteries*, very worthy of our attention ; which deserve much better to employ us, than those abstract and metaphysical *mysteries*, which exercise so unprofitably the understanding of divines, and produce so frequently acrimony, animosity, and divisions.

Honour due to Jesus Christ.

WE use the term *adore* to express the honours, which are due to the Divinity ; and this term is so confined and restricted in our language, at least in the mouth of Protestants, that it instantly awakens the idea of the Supreme Being. This is not the case with the Greek and Hebrew languages, in which one finds no expression that is peculiar and appropriated to this usage. They have only vague terms, which mean in general every honour that is paid to any one. The ordinary word, which they employ, signifies prostration ; and this token of

respect was so common, especially amongst the Easterns, that, not only they prostrated themselves before their kings, but even before persons very far from being considerable.

The thing is acknowledged by all the critics, and on this fact they establish this principle ; that in order to determine the degree of honour, we ought to consider the quality of the persons, and the different relations, which they may support. For example, if Lot prostrates himself before the two angels, it is a civility which is paid to strangers ; if Jacob prostrates himself before Esau, it is the deference which a younger brother has for an elder ; if Solomon prostrates himself before Bathsheba, as a son he honours his mother ; if Nathan prostrates himself before David, as a subject he pays this homage to his prince ; if the Magi prostrate themselves before Jesus Christ, in quality of new converts to Christ, they pay their veneration to the Messiah ; in fine, if Jesus Christ himself prostrate himself before God, it is then a created being, who adores his Creator. There is, therefore, nothing so general, nothing so ambiguous as the act of prostration ; and when interpreters have translated it by *adore*, they have been determined, not by the precision of the original, but by the nature of the subject. In truth, they have abused this rule more than once, by making it militate for their particular opinions. But this is not the business in question ; it is sufficient that the rule

is incontestible ; the manner of applying it only is disputed.

If, then, the opinion of prostration is very equivocal, it cannot constitute the essence of adoration. In effect, the soul cannot adore without the body, and in vain doth the body bow itself, if the soul be not directed towards the object of its worship. God is a spirit, and it is his will, that those who worship him should worship him with the devotion of the mind ; and this interior adoration discriminates what the exterior act appears to confound. When, therefore, the body prostrates itself, God does not take this homage to his own account—thus far all is common between him and princes. But if at the same time the mind contemplates its Creator, acknowledges him for the sole arbiter of its condition, reposes an unreserved confidence in him, then it is that true devotion is formed, the sole worship which God appropriates to himself, and of which he appears to be jealous when he says, “ I will not give my glory to another.” It is his will, indeed, that his ambassadors should be honoured, and in proportion to the character which he impresses on them ; but he cannot suffer that his own proper attributes should be ascribed to them, and that men should substitute them in the place of the Supreme Being.

This being laid down, it is asked what sort of honour ought to be paid to Jesus Christ, and if he ought to be worshipped with what is properly called

adoration? Sacred History informs us, that men prostrated themselves before him, that they addressed to him certain kinds of homage ; but it ought not to be inferred from hence, that he is essentially and by his own nature the supreme adorable Being. The multitude, who wanted to make him king, prostrated themselves before him ; yet they did not look upon him as God, they only saw in him a prophet, and at most the Messiah. One ought then to have recourse here to our principle, and see under what quality the scripture considers Jesus Christ, when it orders us to pay him our homage. This we shall do by examining the following passages.

“Jesus Christ humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross ; wherefore hath God highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

This passage is the clearest and most extensive of any relating to this subject ; it furnishes us with a kind of key to discover the meaning of others. It is not the present business to indulge airy speculations, and draw consequences till we lose sight of the subject. The great concern is to adhere religiously to the precise and exact words. No subtilty can evade their evidence ; they appear written with a sun-beam. It is not for us to frame the objects of our

worship, but it is for us to receive those which God presents to us as such ; and we are commanded to bow our knees before Jesus Christ, merely for this reason, that God hath highly exalted him. The Apostle doth not say, that Jesus Christ is the adorable being of himself ; if he had been of this opinion, would he have forgotten the greatest of all the motives ? Would he have diminished so much, or rather, would he have annihilated the glory of Jesus Christ ? For, in fine, he who does not receive honours, but in consequence of God's exalting him, is nothing, in comparison of that Being, who is adorable by his own nature. If then one prostrates himself before Jesus Christ, he acknowledges thereby that he hath been exalted above all the creatures ; and if every tongue confesses that he is Lord, it is always with this restriction, that he is only Lord to the glory of God the Father. So true is it, that the glory of the Son is dependent on that of the Father ; it flows from God as its source ; it is just that it should return to God as its end. The moment it misconceives its original, it is dissipated and lost. " I seek not my own glory," says the Saviour of the world, " but the glory of him that sent me ; if I glorify myself, my glory is nothing."

"The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honour the Son, as they honour the Father."

Our Lord here complains of the Jews, who treated him with contempt, and endeavoured to take away his life. It is not the concernment of his own glory, which wrests from him this complaint; but he sees with grief the Divine Majesty attacked and outraged in his person; “for whosoever honoureth not the Son,” adds he, “doth not honour the Father who sent him.” The insult which is offered to an ambassador recoils upon his master. If then Jesus Christ commands, that all should honour the Son as they honour the Father, it is not that he means to equal himself to God; he had just protested the contrary in the nineteenth verse; he only assumes here the title of God’s Envoy; and far from aspiring to the same honours, he only appears sensible of what wounds the glory of his Father.

The particle *as*, which he employs, does not denote equality, but a mere resemblance. Ordinarily it expresses the motive or example, and it only exhibits the fact without determining the manner of it; for example, “Be ye perfect *as* your Father who is in heaven is perfect,” not in the same degree of perfection, but be ye perfect *since* your heavenly Father is perfect. “Love one another *as* I have loved you;” not in the same degree of love, that is impossible; but love you one another, *since* I have also loved you. “I have given to them the glory which thou hast given to me, that they may be one *as* we are one;” not in the same degree of union, but that

they may be united together, since thou and I are united. “Forgive us our trespasses, *as* we forgive those who have offended us ;” that is, Lord, we hope from thy mercy that thou wouldst forgive us our sins, since through that goodness, which is essential to thee, thou desirest that we should forgive the faults of others. There are a thousand examples of this kind, which it would be tedious to collect together.

In like manner, “the Father hath committed all judgment to the the Son, that all should honour the Son as they honour the Father, for he that honour-eth not the Son honoureth not the Father who sent him.” This doth not import the same degree of honour ; and Jesus Christ intended to convey this sentiment ; the Father hath invested his Son with the power of judging the world ; and, therefore, you ought to honour the Son, since you make a profession of honouring the Father ; for in honouring the Son, you honour the Father who sent him ; and in despising the character of the Son, you outrage the majesty of the Father. But, further, he who *sends* is always more honourable than the person *sent* ; he who hath in himself the power to judge, ought to be honoured in quality of Judge supreme ; and he who hath received from another this power, cannot be honoured but as subordinate judge. The thing speaks of itself. Jesus Christ does not arrogate to be honoured, but because he is sent of God, and hath received from him the power of judging man-

kind. He does not even exact this honour but because the glory of his Father is interested in it, and by no means on his own account ; so far is he from setting off himself here for that Being, who is adorable in his own nature.

And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, he saith “ Let all the angels of God worship him.”

The author had just said with regard to Jesus Christ, that he was made as much more excellent than the angels, as he had by inheritance a more excellent name than theirs. This is afterwards proved, *first*, from the circumstance of God’s having consecrated and constituted him king ; *secondly*, from the angels prostrating themselves before him ; and the Apostle, according to the custom of his time, expresses his thoughts in scriptural language, by accommodating to his subject three passages. The first, “ Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ;” the second, “ I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son ;” the third, “ Let all the angels of God worship him.” However, two things appear to me incontestible ; the one is, that God is here really distinguished from Jesus Christ,—God, who consecrates and who introduces his first-born Son, from Jesus Christ, who is consecrated and afterwards presented to the angels. The other is, that it is in quality of a man, and of a man more excellent than the angels, that Jesus Christ is repre-

sented to us in this place ; “ He was made as much more excellent than the angels, as he hath obtained by inheritance a more excellent name than theirs ;” and to illustrate this proposition, the writer alleges the testimony of scripture. For God saith, when he introduceth his first-born Son into the world, “ Let all the angels of God worship him.” Now, he who was made more excellent than the angels, and who inherited a name more excellent than theirs, could only be a created being ; and consequently it is as a created being exalted above them, that the angels consider Jesus Christ, and render him their respect and homage.

It does not follow from their prostrating themselves before him, that they regard him as the self-adorable Being. When the herald, who preceded Pharaoh and Joseph, cried out to the Egyptians, “ Bow the knee,” they did not fail distinguishing their sovereign from the new minister, though the honours they paid them were confounded in one and the same act. And the angels, who are still more enlightened, are far from incurring a mistake here. When God introduces his first-born Son, undoubtedly they distinguish the Supreme Being from a man ; him who gives the authority, from him who receives it. And they are so far from taking this new King for the self-adorable Being, that they had no knowledge of him before, and did not address their homage to him till after God had presented him to them.

The Being, who by his own nature is adorable, has no need of an introducer ; he has only to show himself, in order to draw upon himself the respect which is due to him. With regard to this first-born Son, it was necessary that God should introduce him to his court ; it was not till after an order from him that the angels worshipped him. By this act of submission, they therefore acknowledge that God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name ; they confess that Jesus Christ is their Lord, but with this reserve, they are not ignorant that, if he hath been constituted Lord, it is solely to the glory of God the Father.

“ To Him, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise, honour, glory, and power forever and ever.”

These words were pronounced in a vision which St. John had. It will be proper to relate the principal circumstances of it. “ A throne was erected in heaven, and there was one who sat upon the throne. The four living creatures ceased not to cry, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who wast, who art, and who shalt be. And the four and twenty elders fell down before him who sat upon the throne, and worshipped him who liveth forever and ever, saying, Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and by thy will they subsist. Then I saw a book in the right hand of him who sat upon the throne ; and

an angel proclaimed with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book? Now no one had power to open or to read it. And I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the book. Now there was between the throne and the four living creatures a Lamb, as if he had just been slain. He advanced, and took the book out of the right hand of him who sat upon the throne; then the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. I heard also every creature say, To him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb be praise, honour, glory, and power, forever and ever."

It is evident, that he who sat upon the throne is an object really distinct from the Lamb; and it would be unnecessary to insist upon a thing so clear. God holds then here the first rank, as a King sitting upon a throne; and after him Jesus Christ, under the figure of a Lamb who hath been slain. The first of these two images suits extremely well to the Supreme Being; and the second describes to us, very naturally, a man who died for the salvation of the world. Here you see the Deity essentially support himself, and secure, by his own proper nature, homage and adoration. Here, a Lamb, favoured of God, presents itself, and receives not honours but only because it is found worthy to open the book.

This distinction is one of the principal foundations of the vision, and it is upon it we will erect the following explication.

The text describeth him who sat upon the throne as being exalted above the Lamb ; and it does not follow that they are equal in dignity because their praises are combined together, and because they receive the same external homage. Two objects, in other respects very different, may possess something in common, and preserve, however, their natural subordination. When the sacred history says of the Israelites, that they worshipped God and the king, after David had finished his prayer, it is not that they confounded the Almighty and the king, though the external homage was the same ; but in prostrating themselves before the Almighty, they adored the Creator of the world ; and in prostrating themselves before their prince, they acknowledged him for their lawful sovereign. When it is also said of the Israelites, that they believed in God and in Moses, this doth not import that they had in Moses precisely the same confidence that they ought to have in God ; but they believed in God, because he is truth itself ; and they believed in Moses, because he spoke to them on the part of God. When the Apostles say, “ It pleased us and the Holy Ghost,” it is not that they presumed to equal themselves to the Holy Ghost ; but it pleased the Holy Ghost, because he is the Supreme Arbiter ; and it pleased the Apostles, because they

were animated by the Holy Ghost. When St. John himself utters this devout wish, "Grace and peace be unto you from him who was, who is, and who shall be ; from the seven spirits who stand before the throne, and from Jesus Christ," his design is not to erect the seven spirits into as many divinities ; for even by that circumstance *standing* before the throne, they manifest their dependence in regard to God, and the attention they pay to execute his commands. But St. John wishes peace to the faithful from him who was, is, and shall be, as the sole and eternal source of true felicity ; and he wishes them peace from the seven spirits, as these were to be the instruments and scourges with which God was going to punish the enemies of his church.

When, therefore, the creatures say here, "To him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be glory and praise," it is not that they confound the Lamb with him who sat upon the throne ; but they render to God what appertains to God, and to the Lamb what appertains to the Lamb. They praise and honour them conformably to our principle ; that is, each according to his nature and according to his qualities. They praise and honour God as their Creator, and the sole adorable Being ; for they had just said to him, "Lord, thou art worthy to receive glory and honour, because thou hast created all things, and by thy will they subsist." But they praise and honour the Lamb as him who redeemed

them by his blood, and who was found worthy to open the book ; for they had just said to him, “ Thou art worthy to take the book and to unseal it, because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God.” Such is the striking distinction which they observe even amidst their confused and mingled acclamations. And this subordination, which obtains between God and the Lamb, subsists so entirely, that the Lamb himself, when praising God is the concernment, joins his voice to the voices of the living creatures. Whilst he was upon earth, and after he is glorified in heaven, he never ceased to bless the Creator, and to pay his profoundest gratitude. “ I will declare thy name to my brethren, and I will sing praises to thee in the midst of the church. Him that overcometh I will make a pillar to the temple of my God, that is, of the God whom I invoke and whom I adore.” A few verses after, there is mention made of the Song of Moses and the Lamb ; “ Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty. Who is there who will not fear and celebrate thy name, for thou alone art holy.” What Moses had sung after the departure from Egypt, the Lamb applies to our spiritual deliverance. In fine, as the adorations had begun with him, who sat upon the throne, and without the Lamb having any part in them, they also terminate in God alone ; and St. John, after having heard the concert of the living creatures, perceived the four and twenty elders, who fell down and wor-

shipped him who liveth forever and ever. And even he is always worshipped singly in the sequel of the vision, which evinces that he is essentially adorable ; whilst they did not prostrate themselves before the Lamb, but on the day that he was installed and deemed worthy to open the book. Consequently, the honours, which he receives, are attached to his employment, and by no means to his own nature.

From all these passages it is easy to conclude, what sort of honour we owe to Jesus Christ ; they teach us, with one unanimous consent, that it is in virtue of his exaltation, and not of any right which he essentially possesseth. On the other hand, we see not in any respect that he is the self-adorable Being ; and for myself, I confess, that such silence very much strikes me ; at least it merits some attention ; and that one should suspend for a moment his prejudices, before he incurs a rash and precipitate adoration. We ought, therefore, carefully to consult the scripture, for fear of worshipping we know not what. Every time that it commands me to pay my homage to Jesus Christ, it always adds certain restrictions ; it saves so evidently the rights of the Creator, that they cannot receive from it any derogation. On the contrary, they only appear to be better established ; for it tells me, that I ought to honour Jesus Christ, sometimes, because God hath highly exalted him, and invested him with a dignity superiour to the angels, and sometimes because the glory of the

Supreme is here interested ; in that he sees himself honoured, when we respect the character of his Ambassador. Thus, I regard Jesus Christ as the great and infallible teacher ; I admire his power, his virtues, his extraordinary talents ; I acknowledge him for my superior, and as the person who is one day to be my judge ; I acknowledge that, after God, he is the author of my salvation ; I am penetrated with gratitude towards him ; I celebrate his memory ; and the honours which I render him keep pace with the measure of my praises. I abase myself before the king of kings ; I respect in him the image and capital production of the Deity ; above all, I honour him when I strive to obey him, and when I take his precepts for the rule of my life. This is the manner of honouring Jesus Christ, at least it appears to me to be the true one ; and it is permitted to every one to follow those sentiments, which, after diligent inquiry, he believes to have the sanction of revelation,



Power of Jesus Christ.

THE Jews had generally this opinion, that maladies, especially if they were inveterate and incurable, were ordinarily the punishment of some sin, whether they were a natural consequence of it, or were sent supernaturally. They even believed with the Pythagoreans and several Eastern nations, that souls were

created before God united them to bodies ; and in order to punish them, or to recompense them, he lodged them in vigorous and well made bodies, or plunged them into infirm and deformed ones. Witness what the Author of Wisdom makes Solomon say ; “ I was a goodly child, and a good soul fell to my lot ; or rather, being good, I came into a body exempt from every blemish.” Witness the Apostles, who, in regard to the man, who was blind from his birth, inquired of our Lord, “ Who had sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind.” Witness also the Pharisees, who say to this same person ; “ Thou wast born in sin, and dost thou teach us, thou, who wast born with this defect, but on account of the sins which thou committedst in another life, or because those who were the instruments of thy birth, were actually sunk in depravity.”

Let us now proceed to the immediate consideration of this passage. The paralytic desired to be cured, and our Lord replies to him, “ Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.” To pardon sins, is properly to deliver from the punishment which they have merited, and this is the signification of the Greek term. We have seen, that the Jews regarded certain maladies as a consequence of sin, and a chastisement of God. Perhaps this man had lost the use of his limbs by his having lived in debauchery and irregularity. As if Christ had said to him ; Cease, my son, to afflict and deject yourself ;

you have obtained the pardon of those sins, which have drawn down upon you this just punishment of heaven, and you are going to be delivered from your malady. The question then is not here of a general pardon of all his sins, which is never offered but on condition of repentance ; nor of deliverance from the punishments of the other life, which depend on the immutable laws of justice.

To be convinced of the truth of our interpretation, it suffices to attend to the sequel of the story. The Jewish doctors, full of envy against Christ, and always ready to give an invidious turn to his words, treated them as blasphemous, as if he usurped a right which only appertained to the Deity. But in a spirited manner he repels the calumny ; “ Why,” says he to them, “ do you form such a rash judgment ; for which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee ; or to say, Rise up and walk ?” If I can cure this man, and deliver him from the punishment of his sins, cannot I say to him, without violating the glory of God, The sins which have drawn upon thee this punishment are forgiven thee ? Does not the one suppose the other ? And to show you in fact that I have power to pardon sins on earth, or to take away the punishments with which they are often followed in this life, Rise, said he to the paralytic, and go to thy home.

But let us make the greatest concession, and suppose, that one must understand here the general

pardon of all his sins ; does it follow from this, that Jesus Christ is equal to the Deity ? By no means ; for does not he himself say to the Apostles, “ Whosoever sins you forgive, they shall be forgiven ? ” It remains therefore to know, if he pardons them by his own pure authority, which he neither here nor any where else asserts ; or if he pardons them only in virtue of a power received from God, which the Gospel clearly intimates, “ The multitude,” it continues, “ glorified God, who had *granted such power* to men.”

This further appears from the words of our Lord. According to him, it was as much permitted to say to the paralytic, “ Thy sins are forgiven thee ; ” as to say to him, “ Rise and walk.” He lays it down as a principle, which the Jewish doctors could not contest, that it was permitted him to say, “ Rise and walk ; ” whence he concludes, that he could say without blasphemy, “ Thy sins are forgiven thee.” Now this consequence would not be just, if the absolute power of forgiving was attributed to him ; for this right does not appertain but to God alone, and the gift of healing may be found in a mere prophet.

Add to this the perpetual language of Jesus Christ, who refers every thing that he did to the influence and support of his father. “ All power is *given* to me,” and, consequently, this of pardoning. “ The Father *hath committed* all judgment to the

Son," that is, the power of condemning and of absolving. "I judge as I hear;" he could not then absolve of his own mere suggestion. "To sit on my right hand or on my left, is not mine to give;" this distinction is only for those for whom my Father hath prepared it. If he has not the privilege of glorifying, he has not that also of justifying; for the one is a consequence of the other. If from the master you pass to the disciples, they will tell you, that if he pardons sins, it is in virtue of his exaltation and not of his divine nature; for it is he whom God hath raised by his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give to Israel repentance and remission of sins. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews will tell us also, that no one attributes to himself the honour of offering for sins, if he is not called of God; and that also Jesus Christ did not glorify himself to be high priest. If he could not himself offer for sins, much less could he of himself pardon them.

I shall conclude with this argument; he who is our interpreter with God, to obtain of him the forgiveness of our sins, has not originally and of himself the power of forgiving us. Now the Scripture every where represents to us Jesus Christ as our intercessor with God, to obtain from him the forgiveness of our sins; Jesus Christ therefore cannot have originally and of himself the power of forgiving them.

See a remarkable note of Diodati on that passage in the Hebrews; "Thou, Lord, hast laid the founda-

tion of the earth." The sense of this place, as it is here alleged, is no other but that the kingdom of Christ which is manifestly spoken of in that passage, Psalm cii. 26, is eternal, and not perishable like the state of the world. Observe how peremptorily he excludes every other sense.

I felicitate myself on having the concurrence of this most excellent man, one of the brightest luminaries that shone in the Synod of Dort.



On the Holy Spirit.

THE Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, in the primary and natural sense, signifies only the power of God, or the virtue by which he operates. To be convinced of this, it would be sufficient to attend to the etymology of the word, which in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, means the *breath of God*, and which seems to denote rather a quality, than a person distinct from God himself.

1. Various passages of scripture put this beyond a doubt. "When thou hidest thy face," says the psalmist, "the creatures die; but if thou sendest thy *spirit*, they are immediately created." "The *spirit* of God made me," says Elihu, "and the *breath* of the Almighty quickened me." "God," says Job, "made the heavens by his *spirit*," that is, by his power and agency, as the sequel shows.

This term hath preserved the same signification in the books of the New Testament. "The Holy Spirit," says the angel to Mary, "shall come upon thee from on high, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." The Holy Spirit, and the power of the Most High, as is here evident, are one and the same thing in the style of the angels. "I am going to send you," said Christ to his Apostles, "what my Father promised me, but do you stay in Jerusalem till you be endowed with *power from on high*;" this is what our Saviour calls the Holy Spirit, which was to descend on the Apostles upon the day of Pentecost. "You know," says St. Peter, "how God animated Jesus of Nazareth with the *Holy Ghost* and with *power*." "My discourse and my preaching," says St. Paul, "consisted not in those persuasive words, which human wisdom employs, but in a demonstration of *spirit* and of *power*."

From all these passages it is evident, that *Holy Spirit*, *power*, and *agency*, are terms of the same import in the New Testament. And this virtue resides essentially in God, as in its source and only principle, from whence it hath been diffused as it were into several small rivulets in the prophets and Apostles.

2. But by a figure, very customary in all languages, and principally in the Eastern languages, it frequently happens, that they personify what are merely simple qualities, and speak of them as they

would of a person. For example, when we say that the Supreme Wisdom is admirable in every thing that it does, we understand the Creator considered under the quality of Wise. Thus the Holy Spirit, though it is only the power and influence of the Deity, is sometimes taken for the person of God himself, in as much as it works, as it operates ; and sometimes even for holy men, to whom God communicates his power and his influence. I say that it is taken for God himself ; witness the words of St. Peter to Ananias ; “ Whence comes it that Satan hath filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ;” that is, to God, as it is directly after explained ; “ Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

3. I assert, also, that it is sometimes taken for those holy men to whom God communicates his power and influence. “ Believe not *every spirit*,” says St. John, “ but try the spirits whether they be of God ;” that is, believe not every teacher lightly, who says he is inspired of God, but examine if he be truly so. “ Hereby know we,” adds he, “ that a spirit is from God ;” every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. “ It seemed not good to us and to the Holy Spirit,” say the Apostles, that is, to us who are inspired of God, and invested with his power and his authority. “ Baptize the nations into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ;” that is, in order to be called the disciples of the Father, who was revealed

under the Old Testament ; and of the Son, who teaches under the Gospel ; and of the Apostles, who are inspired of God, and whose determinations ought to be regarded as oracles.

4. By a signification, which approaches very near to the preceding, it is also taken for the spirit of man, but then it is a spirit that is enlightened, sanctified, renewed, and endowed with gifts both ordinary and extraordinary ; such, in a word, as the spirit of the Apostles became in the day of Pentecost. This is that spirit, that Jesus Christ had promised them a little before his death ; not that, properly speaking, it was not the same spirit which they had before ; but one may say, that they then received a new spirit, by the sudden and surprising revolution, which was made in their persons. A spirit of consolation, of force, and of courage, instead of that timid and dejected spirit, which they discovered at the appearance of the least danger. A spirit, which was to recall to them every thing that Jesus Christ had said to them, while before they were but little attentive to the discourse of their master. A spirit of truth, which was to lead them into all the truths, in opposition to the errors and prejudices with which their minds were filled. A spirit, which would no longer speak its own private conceptions, but faithfully declare every thing it had learned, very different from that rash spirit which hazarded its opinions too lightly, and often apprehended for truth, what had only the ap-

pearance of it ; in fine, a meek, charitable, moderate spirit, in opposition to that spirit, with which they were animated when they wanted to make fire descend from heaven to destroy the unbelieving Samaritans.

5. The Holy Spirit also signifies, very frequently, the holy dispositions or qualities of the spirit, which the gospel gives us. This is so clear and so little contested, that we will not stay to give illustrations of it.

6. Behold here five different significations of the term Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God. It signifies, *first*, the power or influence of the Deity, whether it be considered in God, or in holy persons to whom God communicates it ; *secondly*, it is taken for the person itself of the Deity ; *thirdly*, for men who are animated with this spirit ; *fourthly*, for the spirit of man, as being enlightened and renewed by an extraordinary grace ; *fifthly*, for those dispositions of spirit, which the Gospel requires. To which one may add a *sixth* sense, which is not different from the second, only as it is supported on a different reason. It is this ; the Scripture sometimes representing God under the idea of a man, attributes to him also a soul or a spirit ; and it speaks of this spirit of God, as we speak of the spirit of man. “ Who knows,” says St. Paul, “ what is in man, except the spirit of man which is in him ? Even so,” adds he, “ no one knoweth what is in God, except

the spirit of God ;” that is to say, God himself. “Take heed,” says he in another place, “that you grieve not the spirit of God.” This signifies, oblige not God to repent of the favours he hath bestowed upon you ; as it is said of St. Paul, that he grieved at the view of the idolatry of the Athenians.

All the rules which have just been established are very conformable to scripture and the genius of language. They also accord extremely well with the unity of God, which is here a kind of fixed point, from which, in this dispute, one ought never to deviate. One cannot say the same of a seventh sense which is very frequent with divines, which is, to understand by the Holy Spirit, a person really distinct from God the Father ; or, to speak of their art with more exactness, the third person of a Trinity in the Divine Essence. This new sense, if it is true that one can call it sense, of words which are totally strangers to it, besides that it is useless and superfluous in explaining sacred scripture, appears to me to contain insurmountable difficulties.

For if the Holy Spirit be a person distinct from God the Father, whence comes it that the Scripture does not say so in express terms ? And the more, as it seems to intimate the contrary, and precipitate us into error, when it speaks of the Holy Spirit, as if it was nothing but the agency of God. Is it for this reason divines allege, that there must be in mysteries a mixture of light and darkness ; light

enough to illuminate those, who have the disposition to believe, and darkness enough to blind the unbelievers ; as the cloud, which was luminous on one side to the Israelites, but was nothing but darkness on the side of the Egyptians ?

If the Holy Spirit be a divine person, whence comes it, that the Scripture never calls him God, and seems even to distinguish him from the Deity every time that it calls him the Spirit of God ? For when we say the will of man, by this itself we distinguish it from the man.

Whence comes it, that it hath never commanded us to worship the Holy Spirit, to invoke him, to render him our homage, since he hath so great a part in the work of our salvation ?

Why ask the Father for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, instead of addressing him, who on this scheme is the author and source of them ?

Whence comes it, that the scripture omits the Holy Spirit in those passages where, on these principles, he ought to have been mentioned ? “ This is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Why not speak of the Holy Spirit ? St. Paul always introduces at the head of his Epistles, “ Grace and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ ;” why not here also mention the Holy Ghost ? “ We have fellowship with the Father and with the Son ;” why not also add the Holy Ghost, of which we are

the temples? And an infinite number of like passages, where the Holy Ghost is always omitted. But what is more, the sacred writers often put angels in his place. “I conjure you in the presence of God, of Jesus Christ, and his elect angels.—Him who shall overcome, I will proclaim his name before my Father and before his angels.—But he, who shall be ashamed of me, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and glory of his Father and the angels.—Grace and peace be from him who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits, who are before the throne and before Jesus Christ.” Why introduce angels into the third place, where the Holy Ghost should naturally have come, if it were true that he is a Divine Person, and the third in the Trinity?

Whence comes it, that Jesus Christ is always called the Son of God, and never the Son of the Holy Ghost, though he was conceived of him? When the angel says to Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, wherefore that which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;” whence comes it, that it is not rather said, the Son of the Holy Ghost? And consequently there will be two Fathers and two Sons in the Trinity; but whence comes it, that according to scripture, there is one Father only, and one Son only?

Christ's Charge to his Apostles.

“Go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” These words, which Jesus Christ spoke to his disciples, before he ascended to heaven, contain two principal things; *first*, a command to spread throughout the whole world the doctrine of the Gospel, “Go, and teach all nations;” or, according to the proper signification of the Greek term, make disciples among all nations; *secondly*, the establishment of baptism, with the design of that ceremony; “baptizing them in, or rather, for, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” In effect, the preposition in the original expresses the end and design which one proposes to one’s self. Let us attempt, then, to discover what was the view of our Lord, when he ordered his disciples “to baptize for the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus Christ, who lived among the Jews, ordinarily makes allusions to their customs, frequently even borrows their own terms, as might be proved from an infinite number of examples. This expression of *baptizing for the name of a thing* is found in their formularies or liturgies. When they admitted a pagan into their religion, they baptized him *for the name of proselyte*, that is, to be henceforth called

proselyte, and to enjoy privileges annexed to this denomination. If he was retained in the service of any one, *he was baptized for the name of servant*; and if he was set free, *he was baptized for the name of free*, that is, to be called servant or free, accordingly as it pleased his master to favour him.

St. Paul also uses the same phrase in the same acceptation, when he reproaches the Corinthians with their schisms and divisions, a prelude of that party spirit, which hath for a long time reigned in the Christian Church. "One said, I am the disciple of St. Paul; another, I am of Apollos; a third, I am of Cephas;" pretty much as they now say, I am a Lutheran, I am a Calvinist. The Apostle condemns, as a bad thing, this extravagant attachment to particular teachers; he wants to crush the evil in its birth, and to abolish those odious titles, which serve as a standard to religious mutiny. With this design he calls back the Corinthians to their baptism; Were you baptized, says he to them, *for the name of Paul*, that is, to bear my name, and to call yourselves my disciples? You were baptized for the name of Christ, and you ought to denominate yourselves Christians and not Paulinists.

At present it is easy to understand these words, "Go, and make disciples among all nations, baptizing them for the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." They signify; Baptize them to be denominated disciples of the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit ; the disciples of the Father, who was revealed in the Old Testament ; disciples of the Son, who had just spoken to them in the Gospel ; disciples of the Holy Spirit, which was to instruct them by means of the Apostles. The Jews only received the old revelation, and could only be called the disciples of the Father. But the faith of Christians is of much larger extent ; they embrace also the doctrine of Jesus Christ ; and besides the character of disciples of the Father, they moreover call themselves the disciples of the Son. In fine, as the Son had not time to regulate all things, and, after his ascension into heaven, the church had still need of a living authority upon earth, we are called to hearken to a third Instructor, the Holy Spirit, which speaks to us by the mouth of the Apostles. Wherefore it is, that when they decide a contested point, they say, " It pleased us and the Holy Spirit ;" and those who submit to their doctrine make a profession of being the disciples of the Holy Spirit.

These are the three great and infallible authorities which in our baptism we solemnly protest to follow ; but, ultimately, it must not be thought, that there is any distinction among them. They all three constitute but one and the same authority. As the Israelites, who believed in God and in Moses,* had not two different objects of their faith, and only

* The Fathers, under the old dispensation, were baptized into Moses, or acknowledged themselves the disciples of Moses.

believed in God alone, who spoke to them by the ministry of Moses ; we Christians also do not believe but only in one and the same God, who first spoke to us by Moses and the prophets, afterwards by his Son, and last of all by the Apostles.



General View of the Lord's Supper.

NOTHING is more clear, nothing more simple, than the Eucharist or Lord's supper, in the manner in which it was established by Jesus Christ. What it offers to our senses is nothing else but bread and wine ; and what it exhibits to the mind under these tokens is an event very easy to comprehend.

But in proportion to its farther and farther remoteness from its original, it lost much of this amiable simplicity. It was imagined, that in order to render it more august, it had occasion for ornaments ; and to conciliate more respect to it, it ought to be rendered mysterious.

At last it hath undergone the same fate, which almost all things in religion have experienced. Divines, according to their custom, have monopolized it, though it was instituted particularly for the people ; and by a thousand subtleties, which they have contrived to weave around it, they have appropriated it to themselves in such a manner, that it is inacces-

sible to the greatest part of understandings, even of those who value themselves on being better instructed than the vulgar.

Happy too would it have been for the world, had divines contented themselves with this, and if this abuse had not produced consequences so deplorable; hence have arisen those differences, and animosities, which incessantly cause new disorders; hence those schisms so ruinous to the church, which tear and divide it so cruelly. Thus it is, that the Eucharist, which ought to conciliate and harmonize mankind, produces a quite contrary effect, and serves, so to speak, as a standard to their religious dissensions.

Instead of extinguishing all their discords, or at least suspending them for one day; instead of all then regarding themselves as the disciples of the same master, whose memory they unite to honour, and as children of the same family, who all cherish the same hopes; it is precisely then, that they are split into divisions, and the spirit of party summons all its forces; every one ranks under the banners of his sect; they vehemently clamour one to another, "No communion to-day;" they erect altar against altar, they fulminate anathemas from all sides; and if the sentence was ratified in heaven, God knows what would be the consequence. Happily he hears not the prayers of those men, who know not what spirit they are of.

Strange ! What was destined in its nature to cement union, is itself become the signal of war ! That which was a festival of love and benevolence among the primitive Christians, and which they called, for this purpose, by the name of *Agape*, that this should have thrown among their descendants an apple of discord, and with it all the horrors of division.

One cannot, therefore, militate more directly against the genius and design of the Eucharist. In general, nothing can be farther from religion than subtilty ; it will never in itself give occasion to contests ; and the ceremony now in question is the only thing in the world, that ought to be the least subject to them. Considered as a practice merely external, there was a necessity for its being very simple, and exempt from refinement ; otherwise the Gospel, whose character it is to be spiritual, so far from introducing it, would never have suffered it. Thus it proposes it in a plain, natural manner, which makes us suspect nothing of the marvellous ; it proposes it even in two or three words, which exhaust the subject.

After this, how could it open such a vast field to divines, so as to furnish them with two or three hundred very knotty questions ? There would, indeed, be occasion for astonishment, if they flowed naturally from scripture, and one did not know, upon other occasions, the fruitfulness of the human imag-

ination, to which it is best to yield all the honour of these discoveries. But such a source as this, does it not beget some distrust, and form some prejudice against these speculations? Thus we shall abandon them with less regret to ascend to the primary institution of the true Eucharist, such as it is described by the sacred historians.

Jesus Christ came into the world to banish from thence ignorance and superstition, to teach mankind a doctrine which would lead them back from vice to virtue, from the misery, in which they lived, to a true and solid felicity. A doctrine, which needs only appear, methinks, to be received with avidity, such are its attractions and dignity, such power has it to win the hearts of men; but excellent as it was, prejudices, aided by passions, strove to crush it in its birth, and at last cost the life of its divine author.

Instructed in the motives, which actuated his enemies, he might have withdrawn himself from their cruel pursuits; but this conduct, of which self love would have availed itself, would have proved fatal to the establishment of the Christian religion. Either he must brave the danger in supporting what he had advanced; and the disinterestedness which he showed imparted a new eclat to truth; or he must in some manner recede, which would have been an irreparable injury to a doctrine so salutary. It would have been suspected of imposture, and error

would have triumphed over truth, which would never have found zealous disciples from the moment they should have seen their chief intimidated by menaces. Touched, therefore, with the fatal state to which depravity had reduced the world, convinced that by sacrificing himself he gave the last blow to sin, he saw the necessity of such a sacrifice, and took the generous resolution of shedding his own blood, rather than put any obstacle to the salvation of man.

With this view he assembles his disciples in order to prepare them for this event ; and, seeing them overwhelmed in profound grief, he addresses to them the most tender and consolatory discourse. Sometimes he explains to them the reasons of his undertaking, and the advantageous consequences it was going to produce. He had said to them a little before, predicting the manner of his death, " If I be lifted up above the earth, I will draw all men after me." He also makes them look upon his own death as a sure means of vanquishing the world. Sometimes he exhorts them to patience, and not to suffer themselves to be shaken by persecution. Sometimes he recommends to them the important duty of benevolence, repeats it, and enforces it by his own example. " This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." Greater love can no one have than to lay down his life for his friend. And in order to preserve the memory

of this signal benefit, amidst all these discourses he establishes the ceremony of the Eucharist.

The circumstance of the time was favourable. It was then the day of the Passover, the grand festival of the Jews. Jesus Christ celebrated it with his disciples, with the design of making it serve to another usage. As they were yet at supper, he took bread, and agreeably to the custom of the Jews, observed especially in the Paschal solemnity, he gave thanks to the Deity that he had given men bread for their nourishment; after which he parted it into several morsels, which he distributed to the Apostles, saying to them, "Take and eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me."

As if he had said, It is necessary that I should be sacrificed in order to accomplish the work with which I am charged; it is a payment which I owe to God, who hath entrusted me with the salvation of the world; the interests of truth require a victim—lo here it is—it is my body. This news afflicts you, but it ought to be to yourselves an example of courage and firmness. And in order to represent to you my body which is going to be broken, eat of this bread which I have cut into morsels for you. I now do not say to you; This is the bread of affliction, which your Fathers eat in Egypt; I say to you, "This is my body which is broken for you." This ceremony is no longer to celebrate the departure

out of Egypt, but affectionately to perpetuate the idea of your Saviour; "At all times, therefore, that you shall be together, do this in remembrance of me."

He afterwards took a cup full of wine, which he presented to his disciples, with a command to them all to drink of it. "For," says he, "this is my blood, the blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many, to obtain the remission of their sins." They seldom made a solemn treaty, but they slew a victim, in order to render it in some measure more sacred, and thereby confirm it the more. Thus Moses did, and made himself a sprinkling of blood upon the Israelites; "This is the blood of the Covenant," said he, "which the Lord makes with you." In like manner, the blood, which Jesus Christ shed, established the truth of his Gospel, serves as a foundation to the New Covenant; and this effusion of his blood is figuratively represented to us by the wine in the Eucharist. Wherefore *drink you all of it*, if you have any regard for the sacrifice which I offer to God, and to truth; for this wine is the symbol of my blood which I am going to shed in favour of men, to the end that being confirmed in the profession of my doctrine, they may obtain the pardon of their sins.

Such is the origin of the Eucharist, such the end which its Author assigns to it. One perceives nothing here that savours of mystery. Every thing in it

is clear, simple, and natural. If we consider the air of the assistants, one observes in them no surprise, except the grief which they witness at seeing themselves shortly to be separated from their master; and to search for the marvellous under a pretended veil, is certainly to want to be more subtile than they. Here is a person, who takes leave of his friends, who eats with them for the last time, who gives them a token that they may remember him.

Besides, it appears from all the circumstances that this ceremony is an imitation of the Passover, except that it represents another event. The Passover recalled to the mind of the Jews the miraculous deliverance from the Egyptian captivity. "When your children," says Moses, "shall ask you what means this ceremony, you shall tell them, that it is the Passover of the Lord, when he smote Egypt." It is the same with regard to the Eucharist. It exhibits to Christians the death of Christ, who delivered them from spiritual Egypt; it preserves the memory of this grand event, and transmits it from age to age. If you here consult the infallible Teacher, he will answer you, that you should do this in remembrance of him. If you address yourselves to the disciples, St. Paul informs you, that "every time that you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord's death till he come."

Remarks on John xiv. 28.

WHEN the Arians object, that Jesus Christ, in various passages, is represented as inferior to his father, the Trinitarians reply, that these passages ought to be understood of Christ as man ; but that though Christ be inferior to his Father as man, yet at the same time he has in him a divine nature, by which he is God, blessed forever, with the Father. If they urge, for example, this passage of St. John xiv. 28. where Christ says, “ The Father is greater than I ;” and that of St. Matthew xxiv. 36. where it is said, that “ the son does not know the day of judgment,” they reply, that it is as man that Jesus Christ says, that the Father is greater than he ; that it is as man that he does not know the day of judgment ; but that as God, he is equal to his Father, he knows all things, he searches the hearts and reins. These answers do not appear satisfactory to the Arians ; they frame various difficulties against them, which merit examination, and which we are going to exhibit to the reader.

1. They say, that in order to apply this answer to the passages which represent Jesus Christ as inferior to his Father, it ought to appear very clearly from scripture, that there are two natures in Christ, one divine, and the other human. But this is what does not appear from the sacred writings. There is

not a single passage which obliges us to regard Jesus Christ as the Supreme God. There is nothing, therefore, which authorizes us to make this distinction.

2. One cannot apply this distinction to the passages of scripture in question, without doing violence to them, without attributing to them a mode of speaking, unknown to all languages, contrary to all the rules of language. In effect, by these rules, one may indeed attribute to an whole, what agrees to some one of its parts ; but one cannot deny of a whole, what agrees to one of the parts which compose it. For example, I can say of a man, that he thinks and that he is extended, because there is in him something that thinks and that is extended ; but I cannot say of a man, he does not think, he is not extended, under pretence that there is in him something that does not think, and something that is not extended. Thus, supposing that Jesus Christ be the Supreme God, he cannot say, that he knows not the day of judgment, as on this supposition he knows it in an infallible manner by his divinity. He cannot say in a general manner, and without any limitation, that this day is unknown to him, without violating truth. The language which they have made Jesus Christ employ, in supposing that he had present to his mind this imaginary distinction, resembles that which I might hold, if, when interrogated by a judge concerning facts which are very well known to me, I should

reply, that they were unknown to me, under pretence that my body had no knowledge of them. It is as if, when one asked me if I had seen such a person, I should answer, no ; because when I saw him I had one of my eyes shut, and did not see him with that eye. It is as if, when one should desire me to write upon some subject, I should reply, that I was not able to write, because my mind could not hold a pen. There is nobody who does not see how absurd such a mode of speaking would be. There is no absurdity a man might not advance, if he were allowed to employ similar reservation. A man might say that he neither eats nor drinks, because his mind properly does not eat or drink. He might say, that he does not think, that he has not an idea of any one thing, that he remembers nothing, that he cannot reason, because all these operations do not belong to his body. One might say, in speaking of Jesus Christ, that he was not born ; that he did not suffer ; that he was not crucified ; that he did not die ; that he was not raised again, or ascended into heaven, because all this is not true of him with regard to his divinity. We easily see that this would be to institute an egregious abuse of language ; we ought therefore to be cautious of attributing it to Jesus Christ, in supposing that he adopted this mode of expressing himself, in pretending that he declared to the world his ignorance of the day of judgment, because he

knew it not as man, though at the very time, as God, this day was perfectly known to him.

3. This distinction, which they have framed, is incompatible with the ideas which the orthodox espouse of the divinity of Jesus Christ. If they acknowledge two persons in Jesus Christ, it might perhaps take place ; they might say, that these two persons in Jesus Christ take their turns in speaking, and that it is the human person that speaks, when, for example, Jesus Christ says that he knew not the day of judgment. But the orthodox do not acknowledge but one sole person in Christ ; that which constitutes his person according to them, is his divine nature ; the human nature of Christ is, with regard to his person, only what *clothes* are in respect to a *man* who is invested with them. It is therefore always the divinity which speaks in Jesus Christ ; for it is this nature, which constitutes his person, which ought to speak ; it is therefore the divinity, according to their system, which was to speak, when they asked Jesus Christ when the day of judgment would happen. Agreeably to their system, therefore, they cannot say, that it is as man that Jesus Christ speaks on this occasion.

4. If one examine the passages to which the orthodox apply this distinction, he will find, that it cannot take place. In effect, Jesus Christ is most frequently represented here as the Son of God, that is, according to the system of the orthodox, as God.

One cannot therefore say, that it is as man that Jesus Christ speaks on these occasions ; for example, in the passage we have already quoted, Jesus Christ says, “ As for that day, and that hour, no man knoweth it, not the angels who are in heaven, nor even the Son, but the Father.” *No man knows it*, neither the angels, nor even the Son, that is, not Christ himself, considered as exalted above the angels, considered as the Son of God, as God, according to that system ; one cannot therefore say, that it was as man that Jesus Christ speaks in this passage ; he excludes even this, when he says *no man*. In effect, when the disciples addressed this request to Jesus Christ ; “ Tell us when these things shall come to pass ;” they did not merely ask him what he might know of them by lights natural to humanity ; they addressed themselves to him as the Son of God ; they wished to enjoy a share of that knowledge which Jesus might possess in this regard, in consequence of his intimate union with the Deity. It follows, therefore, that Jesus Christ must be absolutely ignorant of the time of the last judgment to answer as he did, that there are not in Jesus Christ those two natures which serve for the basis of that distinction they have systematically framed, and that this distinction must be vain and chimerical.

5. Though the mode of speaking, which they attribute to the Scriptures, were not as contrary as it really is to the uniform rules of language, one ought

at least to own that it is far from being natural, far from being customary ; that the expressions, which the Scripture employs, would naturally and obviously enough denote, that Jesus Christ does not know all things, that Jesus Christ is not equal to his Father. Now if Jesus Christ was God, is it conceivable that the Scriptures would have chosen to make use of expressions so equivocal ; expressions, which would have a tendency to overthrow a doctrine of this importance, which would put men in imminent danger of being deceived ? What would the orthodox say of a man, who, in his discourse, would very frequently declare, that Jesus Christ is not eternal ; that Jesus Christ is not omnipotent ; that Jesus Christ does not know all things ; that Jesus Christ did not create the Heavens and the Earth ? It would be in vain for him sometimes to ascribe to Jesus Christ attributes of divinity, he would not fail to pass for a heretic ; they would pretend, that if he were thoroughly convinced that Jesus Christ was God, he would talk in a different strain. Why do they not make the same judgment in regard to the Scripture ? If Jesus Christ was God, would it speak so frequently of him as a man inferior to his Father ; as a man who holds every thing at his hands ? The scripture, in using the language of the Unitarians, does it not authorize their principles ? Why blame so heinously in individuals expressions which occasion no trouble when one finds them in the Scripture ? Why study to

elude, by an unnatural distinction, the clear and natural sense which exhibits itself in these passages. They ought at least to grant, that from the reflections which they make to justify these expressions of scripture, which represent Jesus Christ to us as inferior to his Father, they ought, I say, to grant, that the Unitarians are authorized in speaking as they do of Jesus Christ ; they will be able to say that Jesus Christ is not omnipotent ; that Jesus Christ does not know every thing ; that Jesus Christ did not create the Heavens and the Earth. They will follow herein a mode of speaking approved by the orthodox ; they will adopt the style of scripture ; no one will have any reason to be offended with this language. One must perhaps say on this subject, something like what a famous orthodox man said with regard to the subjects of *Grace* ; *One must preach like an Arminian, and believe like a Calvinist* ; so here, one must speak with the Unitarians, and believe with the orthodox. Who does not see, however, whither sentiments of this kind lead !

To conclude, what shows the little foundation that this distinction hath, which they employ in order to accommodate those passages which represent Jesus Christ as inferior to his Father, is, that the ancient Fathers, even the most orthodox of them, never made use of it. They took a different way to answer these passages ; they owned that Jesus Christ, considered even as God, was in some respects subordinate to his

Father ; that as it was from him that he derived his being, in this regard he depended in some measure on his Father ; in this respect he might say, *My Father is greater than I*. Several also of the most zealous divines for the Trinity employ this expedient, to answer the difficulties which are proposed to them, and do not apply to all sorts of passages the distinction I have been examining.

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